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An Analysis of Participatory Democracy in Scottish School Boards up to 1994

Submitted by James Paul O'Brien

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Glasgow

Faculty of Arts: Department of Education

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ABSTRACT

This work is an analysis of the origins and development of modern school boards in Scotland, 1984-1994. Its major conclusion is that there has been disjunction between theories of participation and management and the system on one hand, and between the system and the operation of boards on the other.

Part one provides a rationale for pursuing this study and poses a range of questions which the analysis attempts to answer. The methodology adopted with regard to documentary analysis of the two public consultation exercises of the 1980s, the educational press and other documents is described. The approach to interviewing of key participants and observers of the events is also explained.

The work is placed in a theoretical context in **Part two** where attention is drawn to the underpinning concepts for the establishment and emerging prominence of participative councils. Consideration is given to theories of democracy, particularly representative and participative forms. Indicators of democracy are considered as is the nature of representation and modes of participation which claim to challenge remoteness and tendencies towards centralisation and elitism. The discussion moves from general theoretical analysis to the potential for such insights to apply to schools and school boards. The main types of participatory action are discussed and the efficacy of using the structure of school boards as a means of applying democratic theories is introduced. Democracies invariably generate bureaucracies so the question of schools being bureaucracies is raised and the relationship to the concept of professionalism is explored. Accountability of schools is identified as especially important to school board functioning.

The nature of school management is then assessed and the possible purposes of participative councils reviewed. The trend towards participative management in schools is analysed with a view to its extension to include lay persons on governing bodies or school boards; it is speculated that this might encourage the development of a management partnership involving lay and professional interests which appeared to be one of the government's intentions in 1987 when the proposals for school boards emerged.

Despite having its own distinctive education system, Scotland is open to initiatives which may have their origins south of the border. **Part three** provides a review of the historical origins of governing bodies in England and Wales particularly after 1944, and developments through the application of legislation in the 1980s, especially the 1988 Educational Reform Act. The political dimension is addressed, in particular Conservative ideology of the "New Right" and the challenge to provider domination in education by the introduction of controlling powers for governing bodies and local management of schools in a bid to raise standards and to satisfy consumer - oriented aims. These developments have caused uncertainty over governors' roles as the line between governance and management becomes blurred. Some auguries for the Scottish experience are evident.

Part four provides a detailed analysis of the events leading up to the introduction of school boards and of board activities till 1994. Two major public consultative exercises are analysed; the aim being to determine the nature of the responses and degree of support for specific proposals, and whether the public were familiar with some of the purposes underpinning participative councils. School councils ostensibly provided a forum for

participative action but this study highlights their strengths and weaknesses, affirms the general view that they had failed, and confirms from the analysis of the response to the consultative exercise that there was little consensus about their reform because no clear opinion on the nature of such councils was evident; should they have advisory, management or policy functions and what would these be?

The emergence of Michael Forsyth as Education Minister, his proposals that school boards with particular and enhanced powers replace school councils on a more local basis and the public reaction particularly through analysis of the official consultative exercise responses, and other contemporary sources is chronicled. The government's response, the Parliamentary passage of the School Boards Bill and the subsequent preparation for boards including the Dumfries and Galloway pilot exercise are examined. Initial and subsequent participation particularly by parents on boards until 1994, is discussed and illuminated by the perspectives shared by key witnesses of the events, various research studies and other available sources. The contribution of key individuals such as Forsyth is reviewed. The nature of the activities boards have embraced generates discussion as do developments in devolved school management and the possibilities these may offer boards.

Part five summarises the key messages of the study which suggest that in the initial years, at local level school boards have often operated in a "legal minimum" mode and have failed to realise many of the relevant conceptual aims and purposes. There is disjunction between theory, system established and the practice of school boards. Board members have been content to be supportive of school professionals partly through lack of experience of involvement in participative councils, partly resistance by boards themselves

to an overt management function evident during and since the consultative exercise, partly because of limits on time, interest, perceived expertise and commitment and partly because of lack of clarity of aims. Government information and training has failed to make boards aware of possible purposes and to stimulate board behaviours which would ensure professionals provide more direct accountability or share in policy formation.

Boards have succeeded in bringing pressure to bear on government and Education Authorities on matters of resources, especially school buildings, and have now become a familiar feature on the educational landscape being consulted by HMI during school inspections, and at national level on a range of education initiatives. Consultation, however, may be regarded as a tokenistic form of participation and views may go unheeded. A national school board association has emerged which may prove instrumental in enhancing parental influence on government while circumstances change little at the level of the individual school.

A third consultative exercise was launched by the Scottish Office just as this thesis was being completed in January 1998. Although reference is made to it in the final chapter, it is not an integral part of this study. Some speculative comment is offered on what boards might possibly do differently in the future given a new government, the advent of a Scottish Parliament and the nature of the experience of boards so far. Areas for further research are suggested and the conclusion that there has been disjunction between theory, system and practice of school boards reasserted.

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PART 1

Research questions and methodology

Introduction and research questions

1. Preamble and research questions

1.1 Why an analysis of the recent introduction of school boards?

The administration and management of schools in Scotland is part of an educational system which is distinct from other areas of the United Kingdom, and Scottish school boards, while part of a general movement for greater parental participation observable throughout Europe (Beattie, 1985; Macbeth, 1990; Bogdanowicz, 1994), are different in composition and powers from school governing bodies in England and Wales. That is not to argue, however, that Scotland has been immune to events and policy south of the border; indeed, there has been in the past decade an increasing worry about "creeping anglicisation" (EIS, 1988) introducing concepts and approaches which might be alien to Scottish norms. Although systems and cultures can learn from each other, it may be inappropriate to translate directly elements from one system to another without taking cognisance of differing values and expectations. The political dominance of the Conservative party in the United Kingdom between 1979 and 1996, combined with the continuing strength of the Labour party in Scotland where Conservative MP's formed a significant minority (with no representatives after the 1997 election), fuelled accusations of ideological loyalties leading to policy introduction and their amendment or rejection by the Scots. Education has been a particular area of change and innovation, particularly in curricular fields and in the area of parental rights and school management. Scotland too has had its share of the "new managerialism" (Hartley, 1990; Munn, 1992; Munn, 1993a; Harlen and Malcolm, 1994; Hartley, 1994; Humes and MacKenzie, 1994; Fairley and Paterson, 1995) and school boards may be seen as part of that.

Preamble and research questions

This chapter offers reasons for carrying out a study of school boards which are a relatively recent innovation in Scottish education.

A brief sketch of developments since boards were abandoned in the 19th century is offered, leading to the proposals for modern school boards.

The research questions underpinning this analysis are then offered.

TIMELINE

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1975 | School Councils established |
| 1980 | Research Report on School Councils |
| 1984 | Consultative exercise on School Councils |
| 1985-6 | Teacher industrial unrest |
| 1986 | Main Report published
Education Act (applicable to England only) |
| 1987 | General Election - Conservative manifesto promise to reform school councils
Mr Forsyth appointed Education Minister
Proposals for School Boards issued for consultation |
| 1988 | Education Reform Act (applicable to England only)
Revised School Board proposals issued
Legislation planned |
| 1989 | School Boards (Scotland) Act
School Board first elections |
| 1990 | "Opting out" legislation issued |
| 1992 | Devolved school management guidelines issued |

1.2 Honourable antecedents: the school boards of the 19th century

'School boards' are not new to Scotland (Roxburgh, 1971) ; the Education (Scotland) Act 1872 "established over 900 popularly elected School Boards" based on parish or burgh (Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge 1980, p.10), but it must be noted that the composition of the 19th century variant differed substantially in remit from the school boards established in Scotland in 1988, particularly in relation to their powers over finance (Scotland,1969, pp.13-19). In essence, such boards were the "education authorities" of their time. Such early school boards were reformed by the Education Act of 1918 which enlarged the unit of jurisdiction and the parish was dispensed with in favour of a self-contained area of sufficient size. The 19th century boards were replaced by 38 Education Authorities whose areas corresponded with those of the then existing County Councils and the four Cities. The new Authorities were *ad hoc* in that their sole function was the administration of education, quite independently from other functions of local government. The more centralised Education Authorities were in turn superseded in 1929 when the Local Government (Scotland) Act transferred the functions of the *ad hoc* Authorities to the *ad omnia* County Councils and to the four Corporations in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen. Each County Council and each Corporation thus became the Education Authority for its own area with responsibility for education among a range of services because,

Local Government reorganisation that year marked recognition that educational provision could not be divorced from other matters in the Community.

(Alex Salmond MP, individual respondent, school boards consultation exercise, 28.10.87)

Salmond equally offered no support for a return to any pre-1929 system:

Off-loading responsibility to parents through central dictat and returning to an educational philosophy and administrative arrangements of the period before 1929 would be socially divisive, educationally disastrous, and administratively regressive. (28.10.87)

Within the century spanning developments from 1872 to the Wheatley Commission which inspired the local government reforms of 1973 a discernible pattern may be evident. The principal components of that pattern have been: a national education service locally administered, with central government ultimately responsible but local authorities owning schools and employing staff. Control over schools became increasingly remote from the neighbourhood, culminating in regionalisation through the 1973 Local Government (Scotland) Act.

1.3 The establishment of school councils

School councils were established in the aftermath of local government reorganisation resulting from the Wheatley report (1969). Part of the rationale was to create a degree of local participation which it was argued, the large Regions did not lend themselves to. By the 1973 Local Government (Scotland) Act, local authorities were required to establish school councils.

These Councils represent a new element in the decentralisation of decision-making and the democratic control of education, especially with regard to schools.
(McKechin, W.J., 1977, p.i)

The Glasgow University Report (Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge, *passim* 1980) indicated that school councils were not, in the event,

successful in promoting the degree of local involvement in school education anticipated, and were dealing with "educationally peripheral and largely non-controversial issues" (*op cit.*, p. 87) . The findings suggested that such councils had little effective role and that parental impact was minimal. Eventually, in 1984, the Government held a consultative exercise to identify the way forward, and the views expressed are analysed in Chapter 7 of this work. That review lay in abeyance until the arrival of Michael Forsyth as Scottish Office Education Minister after the 1987 election. The poor regard in which school councils were held related principally to their lack of focus and meaningful function, and justified the establishment of school boards. Scottish Education Minister, Ian Lang wrote:

While good work has been done by school councils in a number of areas - work on which I hope the school boards system will build - their overall effectiveness was limited. In covering groups of schools they tended to dissipate the essential identity of interest of parents in the actual school which their child attends; and their responsibilities were too vaguely expressed to allow them, in general, to achieve a coherent role with which the majority of parents could identify. (T.S.E.S. 13.10.89, p.21)

1.4 The demise of school councils

In 1987, a consultative exercise was held with respect to Mr Forsyth's controversial proposals to replace school councils with school boards which would have potentially greater powers and responsibilities. Such proposals were allied to developing ideological notions within the United Kingdom Conservative Party (Vincent, 1996) and government relating to school management, the interlocking forces of parental choice and the power of the market, increased accountability and value for money. It has

been suggested that the initiative was a necessary legislative precursor to the introduction in Scotland of the developing policy of 'opted-out' or 'self-governing' schools (Self-Governing Schools (Scotland) Act, 1989) which the Conservative government had introduced in England and Wales as 'grant-maintained' schools (Education Reform Act, 1988, Chapter IV). At the same time, south of the border, governing bodies were being afforded increased power and responsibility. Several forces therefore operated simultaneously to cause the demise of school councils.

1.5 The nature of this study

This study of the origins, concepts, development and procedures of school boards in Scotland, encompassing political, educational and managerial aspects, initially considers concepts associated with the development of school boards in Scotland. Such concepts include democracy, particularly in its representative and participatory forms; bureaucracy; accountability; professionalism; and management, especially in relation to schools.

Increasingly the focus moves from general theories to practice in schools, with illustrative material from the experience of school governing bodies in England, where in the past decade there has been a significant change in the powers, functions and responsibilities of governors (Kogan, Johnson, Packwood, and Whitaker, 1984; Harding, 1987; Mahoney, 1988; Lowe, 1989; Buckby, 1992; Thody, 1992; Golby, 1993; Cordingley and Kogan, 1993; Thody, 1994b). Change in England is compared with the introduction, format, function and experience of Scottish school boards (School Boards Act, 1988; Scottish Office, 1989; SOED, 1989; Scottish Consumer Council, 1990; Macbeth, 1990; O'Brien, 1990; Arney, Munn, and Holroyd, 1992; MacBeath, McCaig and Thomson, 1992; Munn, 1993b; Macbeth, 1994).

An emphasis is placed on the historical development of school boards in the light of the above concepts. Documentary evidence is analysed from the official government consultative exercises on the pre-existing school councils, the government's proposals for school boards and other sources. While there is concentration on historical documentary analysis, interviews with those involved in the events offer primary evidence. They include policy-makers and local authority officials, participants in the establishment of school boards, and representatives of bodies such as the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) and the now established Scottish School Boards Association (SSBA), and professional associations. Academic commentators were also interviewed.

Documents scrutinised included responses to official consultation exercises; details of the Parliamentary debates associated with the School Boards (Scotland) Bill in Hansard; the educational press of the time (Times Scotland Educational Supplement (TSES/TESS) in particular); 'School Board News' published by the Scottish Office Education Department (SOED) and other government-provided support material such as 'Focus'. These provided insights which are further illuminated by the interviews. The four overarching research questions listed below also served to focus the design of interview schedules. The questions, while relating to experience of school boards and their origin and development in Scotland, were prompted by consideration of theoretical concepts (Kogan *et al.*, 1984; Davies and West-Burnham, 1990; Munn, 1991, 1993; Anderson, Cook and Saunders, 1992; Brehony, 1994; Deem, 1994a; Thody, 1994b; Deem, Brehony and Heath, 1995). In brief, it is an analysis which not only moves chronologically, but relates theory to practice and draws both on contemporaneous documentation and, through interviews, on reflections of participants.

1.6 Research questions

There are four over-arching areas of inquiry. They are expressed here as preliminary assertions to be assessed:

- 1. that school boards have generally not been functioning in accordance with theories of participatory and representative local democracy with regard to the management of schools;**
- 2. that the reasons for this 'failure' have been more to do with process than to do with the structure of school boards;**
- 3. that board members have adopted a 'legal minimum' approach ie fulfilling the requirements of the law, but not availing themselves of the opportunity to take on new powers as the law permits or to use influence available to them through making representations;**
- 4. and that government has been content to provide the appearance of local democracy without the reality of such through school boards.**

There flow from these four main areas of inquiry a number of related questions particularly to the first two areas viz

- 1. a. Have boards been largely receptive to and uncritical of the reports of the headteacher at the level of the individual school as research reports and other literature suggest?**

- b. Have board members regarded their expertise as limited, and have they been content to involve themselves in areas which may be considered to be educationally peripheral, such as building repairs or school transport?
 - c. Have professional interests both from schools and Education Authorities eclipsed the work of boards, and, as a result, have lay board members sought to support and legitimise the efforts of the school professionals?
 - d. Have board members little overt knowledge of the range of possible purposes of school boards and has there been little attempt to encourage clarification or exploration of these by the government or by local bureaucracies?
- 2.
- a. Have the majority of members, with the exception of professional teaching staff, generally lacked the expertise to function in relation to the management of schools as envisaged by the theoretical framework underpinning participatory and representative local democracy?
 - b. Have some board members lacked the time, inclination or access to advice and alternatives available in the literature or through training which would equip them
 - to deal with amount of paper received such as reports and requests for views and responses
 - to agree purposes and objectives
 - to delegate or reject particular functions?

- c. Have government publications insufficiently assisted school boards to recognise the range of possible purposes?
- d. Have board members, through induction, training, support and the experience of membership itself have been 'socialised' to particular patterns of behaviour and response?
- e. Have school boards been functioning according to patterns of 'covert consent and protection' (Thody, 1994b, pp.24-28) or, more optimistically 'watchful acquiescence' (Macbeth, 1994)?

The study concludes by speculating on how school boards may develop now that the Labour party has been elected to government; such a futuring focus from the historical base of what boards have achieved in their short period of existence, will offer suggestions on how boards and members may be more effective (Macbeth, 1990; Arney *et al.*, 1992; Kelly, 1992; MacBeath, 1994; Thody, 1992 and 1994b; Deem *et al.*, 1995) or how their role and functions might adapt to changing circumstances.

Research methodology

A document is a witness and like most witnesses it rarely speaks
until one begins to question it.

Robert Bloch

This chapter discusses issues in research employing aspects of historical method principally pertaining to document analysis. The nature and scope of the documentation analysed as part of this study is then considered including points relating to the sampling of responses to the two major consultative exercises on participative councils in the 1980s.

Subsequently the approach adopted for the interviews conducted as part of the study is reviewed including selection of interviewees, interview process and analysis of accounts.

Research Methodology

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Historical methods

- The nature of historical evidence

This thesis employs aspects of historical methodology; Cohen and Mannion (1994, p.45) suggest that this involves "the identification and limitation of a problem or an area of study" and this I established in Chapter 1. They continue by listing the methods involved: "the collection, organisation, verification, validation, analysis and selection of data; testing the hypothesis (or answering the questions) where appropriate; and writing a research report." This approach leads to a "new understanding of the past and its relevance to the present and future". Cohen and Mannion (1994, p.49) quote Hockett (1955) who likens the historian to a geologist who "interprets past events by the traces they have left".

Sources of data can be categorised into two main groups. *Primary sources* of data eg. those items which have "a direct physical relationship with the events being reconstructed" such as the official government records or recollections of people who were present during events and contemporaneous commentaries such as in newspapers. The other group, *secondary sources*, would include an account of an event by someone who was not actually present but who may have used *primary sources* to help formulate the narrative. Both types of sources are important and can contribute to further understanding the problem being researched. However using *primary sources* of data where possible is stressed by various commentators (Cohen and Mannion, 1994, p.51). Primary sources used in the present study were:

1. Returns, held in the Scottish Office, to the government consultation exercises on school councils, carried out in 1984.
2. Returns, held in the Scottish Office, to the government consultation exercises on school boards, carried out in 1988. These have never before been subject to independent scrutiny.
3. Laws, regulations and Hansard accounts of pertinent Parliamentary debates.
4. Newspapers (especially TESS, which changed its name from TSES) during the period being considered.
5. Official advice documents from the government.
6. Publications from voluntary organisations.
7. Publications from professional associations and political parties eg manifesto commitments.
8. Interviews with persons associated with the school boards initiative.

- **Issues in historical method**

A distinction may be made between quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Floud (1973) in his Introduction states:

Such measures as age, wealth, number of children, are explicitly quantitative... Other measures or descriptions that we use in history are, by contrast, non-quantitative in form, and describe instead the thoughts or attitudes of individuals or groups ... we may often find that we can give them full meaning, and access their historical significance, only by measuring the *number* of people who hold such views or who can be described in such terms.

Prior to commencing an analysis of the consultation responses and consideration of the other selected documentation of the period, it was essential to determine a format and process of analysis which would promote consistency and objectivity. An approach which is **qualitative** in

nature reflecting on the opinions expressed, and their degree of influence was generally adopted in this study. However, **quantitative** approaches (for example to enumerate the types of response in the government consultation exercises of 1984 and 1988) were used to a limited extent. While phenomenological impression is valuable, extraction of data or 'facts' is open to interpretation and is often subjective. Categorisation or broad groupings of responses assisted in providing a semi-objective cross-check.

Elton (1967, p.27) notes,

Few practising historians would probably nowadays fall victim to the search for laws; the experience of research is enough to cure such ambitions. But a good many hanker after a certainty and precision which they believe to be proper to science and which, in their view, traditional historical methods lack.

Therefore a mixture of quantitative and qualitative interpretation of data appeared to be the optimum approach in the light of the above remarks, but with an emphasis on qualitative aspects.

Historiography or the history of historical writing has become a popular area for study over the past four decades. Historians have now rejected the notion that "they can produce an 'objective' description, uncontaminated by their own attitudes and values, of what actually happened" (Bullock and Stallybrass, 1977, p.286). The nature of historical evidence has also been an associated concern (Shafer, 1974). Documents are one classification of historical evidence and in the 19th century this classification was regarded as paramount; Langlois and Seignobos (1898) regarded documents as "the sole source of historical knowledge". This

approach is echoed in Carr (1961), where he discusses the 19th century certainty opined by the great amateur (Elton's description) historian Acton compared to today when scholars invariably agree with Professor Sir George Clark's view that historians,

... expect their work to be superseded again and again. They consider that knowledge of the past has come down through one or more human minds, has been 'processed' by them, and therefore cannot consist of elemental and impersonal atoms which nothing can alter ...

On any given theme or historical event, all the evidence does not continue to exist. It is fitful but while ancient and mediaeval history is dotted with lacunae, in modern times with an awareness of heritage and an appreciation for archives and the past there are considerably greater amounts of material being retained - this is compounded by the variety of recording modes and the computerised storage and retrieval systems now available. Some historians are anxious about this reliance on electronic recording of one type or another - the traditional emphasis on document analysis appears to be a potential casualty of these developments. The new quantities of data and 'evidence' present obvious problems to the historian as Shafer (1974, pp. 68-69) notes:

...the historian of recent times often has the opposite problem in that the mass of evidence confronting him demands a selection process at once imaginative, soundly related to the purpose and the records, and operable within a lifetime.

This concern for **selection** and **purpose** is important in any documentary analysis; presumably the same or a similar selection of documents could be used to 'prove' or illustrate different points of view, occasionally

diametrically opposed. One might attack on the strength of 'facts'; equally they can be used by the defence to make their case. This illustrates the *facts vs facts* phenomenon common particularly in revisionist historical analyses. Another concern is *popular misconception vs facts*. The key is perhaps interpretation or reading into documents a particular meaning, possible bias or slant. The critical analyst must be aware of and if necessary declare his or her own opinion and be alert to only discovering or discussing information which supports her viewpoint.

Documents are open to **classification** - this may include type of document eg. handwritten or mimeograph; a typology of audience for which the document was originally produced might be useful too, but an important classification would be the *intent of the composer* (Shafer, 1974, p.73) - this may include a distortion of facts; deliberately setting out to make a point; creating an impression or alternatively written in a spirit of neutrality eg. simple records or instructions. The notion of *composer* is important eg in the 1984 and 1988 government consultative exercises being considered in the present study one *composer* will be the person(s) who designs the consultation document, the other will be the respondent(s). *Neutrality*, or *non-neutrality* therefore may be another classification of documentary evidence, but this would be a matter of opinion on the part of the historian. Importantly, Shafer (1974, p.75) notes

... we must put away the assumption that government documents are especially entitled to uncritical acceptance, just as we must abandon the notion that the appearance of anything in print somehow sanctifies it.

The seminal work on historiography or the study of history is by Langlois

and Seignobos (1898). They too offer views on the classification of documents but before this they assert that history is not a science of direct observation, rather the material of written history is made from chains of reasoning in relation to original documentation and its critical analysis. They differentiate between **external** and **internal** criticism (also discussed by Cohen and Mannion, 1994, p.52). Aspects of external criticism which Langlois and Seignobos cover include errors in reproduction, filling in the gaps in ancient documents etc. and this is not really applicable to the documents on school councils or boards which are analysed in this study, but the authors do offer insights into internal criticism of documents and devote a number of chapters to this important analytical area. Chapter VI (*op cit.*) warns of the dangers of reading opinions into texts:

Whoever, in reading a text, is not exclusively occupied with the effort to understand it, is sure to read impressions of his own into it; he is struck by phrases or words in the document which correspond to his own ideas, or agree with his own *a priori* notion of the facts; unconsciously he detaches these phrases or words... (p.143)

Langlois and Seignobos go on to argue (p.146) that document analysis is concerned with discerning and isolating all the ideas expressed by the author(s). This they describe as *interpretative criticism*. This form of criticism ranges from a concern for the language used and its meaning including the individual language of an author - perhaps comparing and contrasting materials by the same person to detect similarities and consistencies or degrees of obliqueness of expression for example. Positive analysis is complete when the reader has ascertained the real sense of the text. The negative senses are not neglected by Langlois and

Seignobos (1898) as Chapter VII demonstrates. They suggest (p157):

The historian ought to distrust *a priori* every statement of an author for he cannot be sure that it is not mendacious or mistaken.

or the dangers of a tendency to

... think we can tell at a glance whether an author is sincere or a narrative accurate. (p.161)

This suggests that while interpretative criticism may tell us what an author meant, his or her sincerity or knowledge remains unproven. They consider a number of reasons why an author may be insincere (pp.165-172) which ranges from deceiving a reader in order to persuade or dissuade him or her from a particular course of action, to writing to please the public, harmonising his opinions with that which may be expected of him - this could be true in any response to government consultation exercises; a response might be written with a particular audience in mind eg a professional association which may have a collective view or policy on a particular issue - any author may be aware of or write to please such an indirect audience rather than the immediate readership of those seeking comment. Cohen and Mannion (1994, p.53) cite Travers (1969) and his list "of those characteristics commonly considered in making evaluations of writers". Elton (1967, p.74), agrees, suggesting that

Critizing the evidence means two things: establishing its genuineness, and assessing its proper significance

however, he warns (p.76) his readers of an over-readiness to be sceptical,

... the historian, trained to a critical scepticism, is on the whole unlikely to surrender to the bias of his sources ... Instead he faces, curiously enough, two difficulties working the other way. One is this very scepticism. It is all too easy to see deep deviousness in everything and to doubt the apparent meaning of every piece of evidence ... it remains a fact of experience that simplicity, straightforwardness and transparency also exist.

It is also possible to search for and find other intrigue or incompetence eg the apparent incompetence of the school council consultative questionnaire which I discuss in Chapter 7 in Part III. Once clear about interpretation and subsequent selection of facts and/or opinions to discuss, the writer is faced with the ultimate concern of writing about the chosen area of study. Marwick (1970, p.151) acknowledges that while ascertaining the facts is a complicated job, the task of an orderly systematic presentation of the material is then required. There is a concern that any eventual reader is led to the conclusions which the writer is trying to convey. A temptation may be to put down all that is known but as Kitson-Clark (1960) quoted in Marwick (1970, p.152), observed,

One of the earliest and most painful lessons which a young researcher must master is that much that he has discovered with difficulty, and with some exaltation, will prove in due course to be of no significance and of no imaginable interest, and in the end will have to be left out.

Langlois and Seignobos (*op cit.*, p.264) suggest that the relevant facts must be condensed into a manageable form. They conclude that descriptive formulae are essential, both qualitative and quantitative, and that there is a need to search for the connections between facts which allow conclusions to be realised. The search for such formulae has led

historians to borrow from other disciplines such as sociology about which Elton is particularly scathing.

Consideration of the nature of historical analysis would suggest that it is by and large a question of interpretation and critical analysis with respect to the worth and validity of certain views and opinions being expressed, one might:-

1. identify an opinion or view
2. quantify the support for such a view
3. interpret the meaning of such a view
4. inquire about the antecedents of authorship of such a view
including questioning of intention to deceive
5. determine how to use the view or to discard it
6. recognise the potential of identifying issues which one may be sympathetic too.

Johnson (1994) notes the strengths and weaknesses of the documentary approach and cites the work of (Scott, 1990) and his useful classification of modern documents. Scott considers issues such as authorship and ownership of documents which may be personal/ official; private/ state and subject to varying forms of access viz closed; restricted; open-archival; open-published.

With this in mind an approach for document analysis is possible:

- documents can be **classified** in the sense of identifying authors by type eg a response from a school board - these may be quantifiable

- themes within documentation may be **identified** and recorded allowing a degree of quantification, this requires interpretation and alertness to value judgement
- quotations to **illustrate** particular opinions or stances may be selected, this does not prove anything but allows a reader to form a judgement on the illustration
- **conclusions may be drawn** demonstrating 'chains of reason' using the above techniques as the main features of any argument or comment formulated.

A commentary implies more than relaying what is in the consultative responses, it suggests selection and detailed consideration; as Marwick (1970, p.156) comments there is a requirement to move beyond narrative. While one may offer a splendid summary of an event or process, it does not explain why and how such and such has occurred. The great historians, he concludes (p.157),

have been masters of the telling phrase, of neat incapsulations or brilliant paradoxes.

As Anderson (1990, pp.118-119) notes, there are limitations to historical research. I have acknowledged above the incomplete nature of the data and the validity problems with existing data given it was written for other purposes and I duly acknowledge my own 'personal baggage' including involvement in the preparation period for boards and accept that the "historian ... can create a storyline and text which is only incidentally shaped by the available data. You or I might do it differently and we might relate a different history." (*ibid.*)

I determined that a computer filing or database system be used to record and subsequently aid analysis of the documentary evidence (interview evidence was recorded and analysed via word processing approaches).

Such a database would allow:

- ready quantification by classification or type as above
- the recording of interpretation in the sense of assigning opinions or views to a particular concept, eg bureaucracy
- ease of retrieval of illustrative quotations.

Filemaker Pro (FMPro) was selected to be the database and unlike other databases which require all fields to be set up in advance of data insertion and analysis, Filemaker permits fields to be included at any time and automatically updates all records. Reporting features within Filemaker were sophisticated enough to deal with the types of data including quotations which were being sought. For example, the school council questionnaire generated c. 400 responses, while the Scottish Office received c.7,600 replies to its school boards consultation but not all are available for public scrutiny. While it appeared relatively straightforward to construct a computerised database to record and support the analysis of the school council responses, the sheer number of replies on school boards meant that I felt it necessary for reasons outlined on pp.28-29 that a sample of these responses be analysed. FMpro enables both analysis and individual retrieval of data from these and other data acquired in this study.

Sampling is often used in experimental educational studies (and in particular in surveys) to devise test scores or other data from a limited number of persons (Lewis,1967, p.97), the results obtained may then be taken to apply to a larger population. In her discussion of survey designs

(Johnson, 1994, p.15) illustrates the difference between a population, eg all secondary headteachers, and the next stage of arriving at an appropriate number or sample of headteachers to approach with a questionnaire. The responses to the government's consultative exercise on the proposals for school boards may be regarded as the population or 'units of enquiry' that part of this study on school boards relates to; the other, involving the people I interviewed as part of this study, might properly be described as an opportunity sample. When selecting a sample of a population for consideration and analysis what might influence the identification of the sample?

The literature on **sampling approaches** for educational research described a number of approaches, weaknesses and difficulties with sampling. Johnson (1994, pp.16-17) discusses non-probability sampling and suggests this form of sampling is necessary if 'generalisable' information is to be provided by the sample. She also alerts the reader to the need for a common framework of reference between the researcher and the population researched, particularly when concerned with the meaning and use of language. For example, it may be assumed that in this study, there are obvious traps to be avoided when arriving at any sense of shared meaning between professionals, parents, school council/board members, community representatives, academics, and interested citizens in relation to the school board consultative responses.

Blalock (1970, pp.51-58) discusses some of the issues and problems surrounding **probability samples** and indicates that the larger the sample the more confidence one may have in the results; size is therefore important and not the proportion of the population the sample represents.

Blalock as other writers on sampling (Nisbet and Entwistle, 1970 pp.24-31) differentiates between types of sample:

random sample

where everyone in the population has an equal probability of being selected. This is usually arrived at by using tables of random numbers and may be likened to the national lottery approach. However, he does stress the need for a list of the population to be used in association with the chosen random device such as a table of random numbers.

stratified sample

where there are several strata or layers of the population, (such strata will of course contain subjects with similar characteristics) in each of which a random sample is then generated; this will ordinarily not give each individual an equal opportunity of selection.

cluster or area sample

where specific geographical areas are identified in a national survey for example.

Cohen and Manion (1994 , pp.87-89) discuss such approaches too, and add a number of refinements:

Systematic sampling

which is a form of simple random sampling whereby in any list of population after a random start, every twentieth person would be selected in the sample for example.

Stage sampling

which is an extension of cluster sampling and involves taking samples from samples, e.g. from a large community one might select secondary schools at random, then select a number of curriculum subjects at random, and finally select teachers of such subjects at random.

Cohen and Manion also refer to **non-probability samples** (pp.88-89).

Convenience sampling

this is sometimes referred to as accidental sampling and involves choosing the nearest individuals to respond.

Quota sampling

which is regarded as the non-probability equivalent of stratified sampling and attempts to achieve a representative sample in terms of the proportions in which they would occur in the population.

Purposive sampling

is where the researcher selects the subjects on the basis of a judgement of their typicality.

Dimensional sampling

involves a further refinement of quota sampling whereby respondents may be selected by identifying certain factors of interest in a population and obtaining at least one respondent of every combination of factors.

Bias in sample selection is a constant concern. A preliminary investigation of types of response made in the returns on school boards

was thought necessary, prior to identification of the actual sample for analysis. One might have been tempted only to review those responses from formal bodies such as professional associations or other national bodies. Certainly this approach would offer an opportunity for analysis to determine the degree to which the issues and suggestions raised in the consultative paper of 1987 were subsequently mediated by such 'influential' responses. However, a theme of this study has been the extent to which 'ordinary' citizens can or should be involved in such local matters. It was important therefore to recognise that some analysis of such responses was required too.

Nisbet and Entwistle (*op.cit.*, p.30) suggest that

The rules of sampling ... are often broken for practical reasons...
In such cases it is important to obtain and report evidence on the composition of the sample, so that readers can judge how far it is representative.

Cohen and Mannion (*op.cit.*, p.87) sum up what I was attempting to do:

Researchers endeavour therefore to collect information from a smaller group or subset of the population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study.

and the nature of the samples selected for this study is described below.

2.2 Assessing public consultation exercises

- **Response analysis**

There have been two government exercises in Scotland to obtain views about school councils or boards for groups of schools and individual

schools. The research on school councils (Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge, 1980) was followed up in 1984 by a government-led questionnaire-based consultative process on school councils which resulted in responses from school councils, local authorities and other interested organisations and individuals, while there was a further consultative exercise in 1988 on the government's proposals to introduce school boards, which drew the largest written response of recent times particularly from 'ordinary' members of the public.

An analysis of the *primary source* returns in the school council and school board consultative exercises would perhaps illuminate the degree to which any of the major associated concepts of this study have featured in the various responses. The extent to which the official government actions or responses to the consultation have been influenced by opinion and claims regarding such concepts may indicate certain acceptance or otherwise of particular stances or actions which may or may not be ideological in nature and which may be responsive or not to the perceived wishes of those being consulted. It was necessary to differentiate between "replies" to the Scottish Office consultative exercise included in the Scottish Office formal record, the additional actions of obvious pressure groups and the commentary afforded on the issues and debate by the press and the record of debate within Parliament in relation to the proposed legislation. To that purpose the Scottish Office records on the two consultative exercises have been sampled, analysed and reported on in Part IV (cf Chapters 7 and 8), while other documentary information was used to inform the chronicle of the period.

The responses to the two consultative exercises are collected and

archived in the Scottish Office, but in the case of school boards only a limited number are available for public scrutiny; the nature of such consultative processes means that within responses there will be a range of views and counterviews reflecting individual thoughts and opinions as Floud has suggested. Such responses are invariably in written documentary format and may therefore be treated as historical documents in which both facts and opinions may be recorded. Such documents are the raw material of the historian.

- **1984: School council consultative exercise - questionnaire analysis**

The Scottish Education Department (SED) had designed Annex B of their 1984 consultative document in the form of a questionnaire; it was in three formats - one for School Councils to complete, one for Interested Parties, and the other for Education Authority completion.

Chapter 7 contains the detail of my analysis; all the replies and limited associated documentation were read and categorised against a range of types of response in the FMPro database (Appendix 1 provides an illustration of the screen format and fields of the database) designed for the purpose. The database allowed recording of information which was both qualitative and quantitative. General information was recorded including the nature of the response eg. Annex B completion or 'alternative' form of response. Major arguments included in alternative responses (ie. alternative to questionnaire completion) were noted and comments recorded for possible quotation. Three forms mirroring the 3 formats of Annex B were completed with details from the response as appropriate. If I adjudged a response focused on the related concepts of this study then this was recorded too so that the response might feature in

a further analysis if I felt this was tenable in the light of the overall returns and data recorded. The list of concepts is highlighted in Chapter 7. In all some 405 'responses' were analysed ie. the complete response file; I accessed all this documentation through the kind offices of my supervisor who had retained the entire record copied to him by SED in 1984.

- **1988: School board consultative exercise - response analysis**

The responses were accessible in the Scottish Office Library, Old St Andrew's House, Edinburgh. I had arranged by telephone to view the files and I was equipped with a cassette dictating recorder for note-taking and a portable computer. Prior to my initial visit, I had developed an FmPro database akin to that used for the school council analysis ready for 'on the spot' development and enhancement as the focus of my initial consideration of the records. My visit and request for access and assistance resulted in a courteous response by interested staff and a wait of 50 minutes while the files were 'found'. The files were retrieved from an Annex and were delivered to my allocated work area on a trolley. The files were dusty and some were in a black bin bag; the indication was that few people had accessed them in recent times.

The SED had filed the complete record by receipt date and retained in pink folders labelled alphabetically A-Z and AA-RR (no I or II used). I organised them in this order in six irregular piles on the trolley. Responses were not comprehensively catalogued, only a limited initial few of the files had a listing of responses attached in the inside cover. File A contained a copy of consultation document issued plus a handwritten listing of the original circulation list. The Consultation Paper was issued in August 1987 with replies expected not later than 1 October 1987. The indications I had from

reading press accounts, were that the 42 files contained between 7600 and 8000 responses. In order to determine the nature and appropriateness of my sample I selected at random a file from each pile (each was randomly sized) ie.6 Files were initially selected - C/ F/ R/ V/ HH/ NN .

Consideration of these 6 files allowed me to further develop the skeletal database. The broad objective was to secure at least a 10% random sample, but to allow for vagaries and possible problems with some responses (see over for details) I recorded every eighth response; this is referred to as Original sample in Chapter 8. I also wanted to analyse the comments of other bodies and the professionals involved (referred to subsequently as the Special Interests sample). I recorded details from responses from Other Bodies from the first six files reviewed *in addition to* every 8th response. After this initial development and 'testing' of my approach which took several visits, I proceeded to analyse the remaining 36 files in alphabetical order using the same procedures and completed records in Fmpro over a period of time (for a sample of a completed record see Appendix 2).

Every 8th response generated 375 records which were analysed as the Original sample; on the basis of my determination of what constituted a response (see below) and allowing for a small number of file end responses not included this reflects a total number of replies in the public file of just over 3000. The Special Interests sample amounted to an additional 282 responses being analysed. In total therefore 657 responses were analysed from the records publicly available. The SED recording process involved dating the response on receipt and indicating in writing on the response whether it would be in the public file. The records I reviewed were all photocopies of original responses and ranged from typed replies with associated minutes and records of meetings and resolutions to handwritten letters of two or three lines indicating a view on the proposals.

There was a number of obviously mimeographed identical replies signed by different individuals and these were all treated as individual replies. In several instances, there were attachments from individuals accompanying an official response, in such cases I treated the entire record as one response eg some school councils adopted this approach as did the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC) who attached individual replies from committee members to the CCC's official response.

Approximately 50% of responses remain closed to public scrutiny because respondents wished them to remain confidential or because they were responses to the 'purple' summary document circulated in schools and not formally regarded as a response to the official consultation paper.

In addition to information about points of view being expressed and the main issues arising from the responses to the proposals which involved recording the main arguments of points included in a response plus potential quotable material plus any relationship with the major concepts related to this study, my data recording allowed analysis *inter alia* of the following features from a **quantitative** perspective:

category of respondent

geographical location

support for increased parental involvement

desire for revamped school council

favourable/not favourable/neutral in response to the board proposals or non-categorisable

and also quantitative analysis of issues emerging from responses which were categorised as overleaf:

Balance of representation	Board per school
Budget issues	Ceiling powers unacceptable
Community is more than business	Confidentiality issues
Conflict with EA	Consultation not executive control
Different curricula will emerge/curriculum control	Damage to curriculum
Divisions because parents may/may not attract funds	Executive powers on uniform/discipline
Election issues/term of office	Improve standards?
Financial costs	Parents too busy-children/jobs- lack skills
Inhibits local community	PTA links necessary
Pandering to a minority/ control by minority	Prominent role for non-professionals
Professionals being undermined	Reduce cooperation between schools
Politicisation of school management	Role of HT
Reduce cooperation between parents/teachers	Training needs
Secondary school pupil role	

2.3 Educational press and other documentation

The major additional documentary source researched was the Times Education Scottish Supplement between 20.4.84 and 21.6.96. I read and recorded on FMpro database the 'news', leaders, and other articles such as *Platform* where writers offer views on important issues or describe some research or development eg "Masters and apprentices" (p.22, 8.2.91) summarising my own school board training research. The main points of any board related piece were summarised with illustrative quotations. I also read all editions of School Board News (published by the Scottish Office) and Grapevine, the newsletter of the Scottish School Boards Association (SSBA). Also analysed were occasional leaflets and other publications from the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC), the Educational Institute for Scotland, various churches and some local authority publications on school boards. Since these were 'one-off' papers designed specifically to influence the school council/school board debate, sampling was not relevant.

2.4 Interviews

Johnson (1994) suggests much useful work can be done which relies on the use of available printed data as a source of evidence (pp.25-28).

Educational research often uses a number of other approaches such as case studies and/or interviews to supplement the analysis of documents in order to 'triangulate' views from a qualitative perspective. To that purpose I determined to interview a number of participants to obtain their recollections of the issues and events.

• **Selection of interviewees**

In all 14 people agreed to be interviewed; they 'represent' a limited range of interests in and experience of school boards particularly in the period of their establishment. The interviewees included people with experience of the following categories:

parent activists ie. local/national parent organisation committee officer
parent board members
co-opted board members
local authority officials including school board co-ordinators
researchers (independent and SOEID funded) into school boards
school council members
school teacher
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
General Teaching Council parent member
teacher professional association representative
consultant on school boards training to SOEID
consultant on school boards structure and functions to SOEID
SOEID project manager for establishment development of boards
educational writer/author
SOEID sponsored school board research steering committee members

It must be noted that some of the interviewees belong to several of the above categories which are not mutually exclusive. The type of interview I sought was an **elite** interview ie. "one directed at a respondent who has particular experience or knowledge about the subject being discussed" (Anderson, 1990, p.223). It could be claimed that those interviewed are involved, interested and key 'witnesses' of the school board initiative eg the researchers interviewed are the three principal Scottish academics who have concerned themselves with any intensive study of school boards, while several of the parent activists interviewed had direct access to government or influence through national bodies and played a full role in relation to the introduction of boards. This reflects the intention to obtain in-depth comment and recollection from a diversity of observers actively involved in the development of boards. In addition several of those interviewed were 'observers' of and/or participants in the actual events; semi-anecdotal comment therefore provides interesting 'fly-on-the-wall' observations and insights.

My intention was to interview Michael Forsyth, the perceived architect of school boards, and his Labour counterpart. Mr Forsyth declined to be interviewed due to pressures of his new office as Secretary of State. As a result I decided not to interview an official representative of any political party. While those interviewed were not necessarily politically neutral as individuals, their involvement in school boards was not because of political affiliation. All were participant observers of different aspects of the advent of school boards and their evolution.

Local authority officials including members of the Directorate and school board co-ordinators witnessed at first hand much of the initial formation of

boards. Two interviewees, Christine Dignan and Bill Fordyce were particularly involved in the 'pilot' boards in Dumfries and Galloway and as a result may have been close to government developmental thinking on boards. Additionally the SOEID HMCI responsible for project management related to the establishment of boards provided his perspective on the period of preparation for and establishment of boards.

The researchers interviewed were Pamela Munn, Moray House Institute, who with others reported on the 'pilot' school boards and conducted the research into school board training (Munn and Holroyd, 1989; Munn, 1991; Arney *et al.*, 1992) and who continues her interest with some longitudinal case studies of boards; Alastair Macbeth, University of Glasgow, who has a long-standing interest in participative councils and the role of parents in education (Macbeth *et al.*, 1980; Macbeth, 1990, 1994); John MacBeath, University of Strathclyde, who was intimately involved as a member of the team which developed the SOEID training materials for school boards (O'Brien, 1990) and who with others conducted the SOEID sponsored research into what boards were doing and achieving in their initial years (MacBeath *et al.*, 1992; MacBeath, 1994). While he has been an active school board member, MacBeath's research interests in recent times have engaged him less with boards despite his focus being school improvement and school leadership.

Parent representatives interviewed include several who were active in school councils, prior and subsequent to the establishment of boards and who became board members; parents who are/were officers and leading figures of national and or regional organisations such as SPTA, Lothian Parents Action Group and the SSBA.

Most interviewees initially qualified their observations by indicating the time elapsed since the major events associated with the proposals for and introduction of school boards.

- **Methodology and interviewing approach**

I adopted a semi-structured approach to interviewing (Drever, 1995). The interview schedule (Appendix 3) was devised in conjunction with my supervisor and reflected the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Several versions were drafted and questions were re-phrased and regrouped (Oppenheim, 1994).

I determined the 'categories' of interviewee that I thought would provide helpful insights, identified in association with my supervisor several people who might usefully be interviewed and initially wrote to one requesting access. This was granted and I used this particular interview to 'check' my approach to welcoming the interviewee, question running order, pacing and the "overall strategy for recording and analysis" (Powney and Watts, 1987, p.127) and to alert myself to any practical organisation problems which might arise and which I could do something about for subsequent interviews.

I then wrote to each potential interviewee advising them of the nature and purpose of my study and requesting access to them for approximately 1 hour. If they agreed to be interviewed (only two who were approached refused, one being Michael Forsyth) I sought their permission to tape-record the interview and sent them the interview schedule of questions one week in advance. All interviewees agreed to be taped and all agreed that from the transcript I would develop a draft record of their recollections,

views and opinions. This draft record would be sent to the interviewee for possible amendment and subsequently become the agreed record which I was free to quote or comment on for the purposes of this study.

Occasional rough and intermittent notes were kept by me in addition to the tape record, but there was no consistency of note-taking throughout the interviews. I adopted the above process with all the interviewees and was the sole interviewer.

Mindful of the need for good conduct in interviewing (Edwards and Talbot, 1994, pp.87-89), I sought to put all interviewees at ease, therefore ten interviews were conducted in interviewee territory. Three of the interviews were held in my office by interviewee request and one was by telephone with an interviewee who now lives in England; with this exception all interviews were 'face-to-face'. At the beginning of each interview I repeated my purpose, offered thanks at the end and affirmed my thanks in the two subsequent letters to each. ie. the letters accompanying the draft and then agreed record.

- **Analysis of agreed interviews**

Powney and Watts (*op.cit.*) devote a chapter to the transcription, logging and analysis of data derived from interviews. They note that tape-recording has positive and negative aspects; it under-represents communication by concentrating on sound only (p.145) which can be compounded at the transcript stage. Alert to this, all the transcripts were completed *verbatim* by someone else, and the subsequent editing of the written form was undertaken by me. I edited the transcripts and related responses to the question areas I had pursued as necessary until the final version was agreed.

The analysis of the interviews involved "constructive interpretation" (*ibid.*, pp. 158-168) This involved consideration of first-order and second-order perspectives ie. it was about what boards had been doing but also about the perceptions and values of those participating. Lack of quantitative data did not make the interpretation any less rigorous. Interpretation inevitably involves selection and reduction of the data and is a dynamic exercise and my intention was to find supporting or contrary 'evidence' to triangulate the documentary analysis and the available literature and accounts of school board developments. I adopted both *inter* and *intra* approaches to the analysis of the interviews.

I alone carried out the practicalities involved. All the agreed records were in electronic and print form. An initial review involved highlighting important points and possible quotations in each record; a second stage involved creating a separate file per area of questioning which included the responses from each interviewee. I ordered these per category of interviewees eg. parents, EA officials, researchers etc. prior to subsequent analysis by area under consideration. I subsequently drafted my report of this analysis and identified parts thereof which might best support other discussions throughout this thesis and those parts which would provide Chapter 10.

The agreed reports of the interviews have been archived.

PART II

Theoretical contexts

Democracy: its meaning and forms

This chapter considers the concept of democracy and its theories with a particular emphasis on ideas pertaining to representative democracy and participative democracy which have contributed to the development of our

... when there are so many who contribute to the process of deliberation, each can bring his share of goodness and moral prudence (Book III, ch.xi,5.2).

Aristotle, The Politics

... the best government (need it be said?) must be the government of the wisest, and these must always be a few. The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves.

(Democracy and Government, London Review I and II, 1835)

J.S. Mill

It is not representation if the constituents do so far retain a control as to act for themselves. They may communicate with their delegate... but he is to act - not they; he is to act for them - not they for themselves.

Lord Brougham

No man can represent another man, and no man's will can be treated as a substitute for, or representative of, the wills of others.

G.D.H. Cole

Democracy means government by discussion but it is only effective if you can stop people talking.

Clement Attlee

Democracy is a pooling of ignorance.

Unattributed

parliamentarian system and to developing notions of more 'grass roots' democracy with increased participation at such local level.

Theories of Democracy

3. Democratic theories

3.1 Introduction

School boards and their predecessors have been introduced as a means to local level democratic influence on the nature of schooling. Theories of democracy are directly relevant to school boards; they have helped shape their structures and processes. Democracy is both 'an ideology and a social and political structure' (Stankiewicz, 1980, p.117). This offers opportunities for theorists to utilise forms and structures as norms which in turn are used as justification. It may be argued that theories of politics (and **participation** in particular) are fundamental to the construction or formulation of theories of democracy. The theories of democracy inhabit realms of politics, economics, philosophy, sociology, political economy and history among others leading to a series of alternate ideologies.

'Traditional' theorists of democracy have viewed democracy as 'good government' in addition to having an educative function and justifying an expansion in participation by 'ordinary' citizens. There are Marxist, 'classical', 'pure' and 'capitalist' interpretations of democracy, and the 'revisionist' school of democratic theorists (Lively, 1975) of whom an example is Schumpeter. Schumpeter (1952, p.250) examined the existing understanding of what he termed the 'classical theory of democracy' which was defined as

...that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will.

This Schumpeter criticised in terms of unrealistic assumptions relating to the 'common good', and the assumption that all persons are equal to the task and not largely incompetent to undertake this role. He suggested an alternative to the 'classical' doctrine suggesting that we regard democracy as

...that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote.

The above view may be held to be closer to a definition of politics despite it being his definition of democracy. This illustrates the potential difficulty of relating ends and means. Schumpeter assumes that people wish to obtain power and highlights the political reality of western democracies fuelled by party political systems where individuals or groups contest for domination eg a radical commitment to change in society or a stance of protecting the nature and fabric of society as understood by those who espouse such a political stance. This competitive system seeking voter allegiance depends on a perception of political institutions as being powerful entities; the 'ordinary citizen' being interested in and involved with, generally on the occasions of a ballot; and there being a sustainable number of interested individuals identified with particular party ideologies seeking this power through this system ie candidates for such power. A major criticism of this approach to is that it tends to describe what exists especially at a national level. This too may be questioned as a basis for theory. It may be argued, however, that this is a realistic or descriptively accurate 'definition' of democracy, because it can be defended on empirical grounds. As Nelson (1980, p.35) notes

It is compatible with great variation in the extent to which citizens participate actively in politics, and in the extent to which elected officials attempt to respond to the wishes of the electorate or to exercise leadership from above.

There are signposts here regarding acceptance of elite rule and so theorists have criticised Schumpeter's 'model' by suggesting a counter-balance in a form of increased citizen participation. Lively (1975, p.42) describes Schumpeter's work as representing the 'elitist views of democracy'.

3.2 Forms of democracy

For this writer, the most obvious 'forms' of democracy are direct democracy and indirect democracy.

- **Direct democracy**

Where all the people participate directly in decision-making; in an information technology and communication age this is technically feasible - for example by citizens carrying a hand held infra-red remote democratic control. Apart from the difficulties and the scope of 'new technology' both in relation to direct and indirect democracy discussed by McLean (1989), there are potential problems and 'dangers' in this approach. The strong possibility of a 'pooling of ignorance' exists; ill-informed decisions can be made following fleeting fashions for example based on emotional response rather than reason or moral principles or considerations. Such 'direct' democracy has the form of more involvement but the quality of involvement may be debased. Such a referendum-like approach presupposes knowledge and the will to participate directly.

- **Indirect democracy**

Where voters or groups may elect or select personnel to represent their

interests or views and/or beliefs eg electoral democracy. Representative democracy is the most common form of 'indirect' democracy and while this is discussed more fully in 3.6 some initial remarks may prove helpful. An electoral process needs candidates to demonstrate their worthiness to the electorate. This implies the transmission of information and values to the electorate who may as a result be more fully informed on a range of issues and subsequently be more able to provide quality decision-making at the ballot box.

Mencken (1971, p.145) suggests

there is no need to differentiate too pedantically between the two forms of democratic government, for their unlikeness is far more apparent than real.

In contrast it may be argued that the forms and structures that representative democracies adopt are varied, and have largely contributed to the concern and demands for increased 'direct' participation. These concerns are often related to the power and influence held by 'centralised' bureaucracies deemed to be essential to the smooth operation of democracies (bureaucracy as a concept is considered in Chapter 4). This would suggest that bureaucracies deal effectively with routine administration and a delegated level of decision-making, but that particular levels of decision-making will be the exception to the power and influence of a bureaucracy. This application of the 'exception principle' to the political sphere would suggest that if politics is concerned with long-term planning, critical decision-making and precedent setting it is dealing with the major issues. Everything else might conceivably be delegated to a less central or local level eg. local government or a local bureaucracy. The question of power is revisited here because much will have to be made of

the relationship between representatives and the bureaucracy and where the power lies eg certain bureaucracies already have power and can be unwilling to share this when a new representative body materialises; this may be the case with school boards in Scotland in their relations with local authorities particularly their officials such as headteachers. Elected representatives can be and are replaced by an electorate; this is a major right in a representative democracy. Eulau and Prewitt (1973, p.446) describe this as electoral eviction,

The men (*sic*) who rule are responsive to the preferences of the ruled because the rulers, as elected officials, can be and are held accountable through the simple mechanism of eviction from office.

Similar powers over bureaucracies do not exist except in relation to terms of accountability and degree of responsiveness.

Democracy is a multi-faceted concept. Lucas (1975, p.11) suggests that

There is no one single argument for democracy, any more than there is one single form of government that should be reckoned a democracy.

Section 3.4 provides a summary of each 'theory' or 'model' or 'aspect' of democracy taken in turn. A brief description of the main characteristics and initial comment is offered. Finally these are reviewed with a view to identifying a series of possible indicators of democracy, but first a brief discussion of some difficulties of interpretation.

3.3 Some methodological difficulties

Difficulties exist in determining whether an approach is a 'theory' or a 'model' or an 'aspect' . This is because many 'theorists' are writing from an empirical perspective and may well be heavily influenced by their culture and internalised ideologies. Initial consideration of this empirical/rational debate may illustrate this point.

- Rational versus empirical democracy

Sartori (1987, pp.51-55) outlines the distinctions between two types of democracy - empirical democracy and rational democracy - while recognising that no real systematic treatment has been done. As an example, he argues that French-type democracy is based on rationalism ie abstract principles and imaginary societies (Bryce (1924, I:208) or alternatively, a rigorous deduction process. By contrast our British form of democracy is empirical ie constructed not from what it is or ought to be in principle, but more from how does this work or has it worked? His rationale for this argument points to a set of general principles which such democratic systems may practice:-

Rational	Empirical
proportional representation parliamentary/assembly sovereignty the “State” depersonalized and impersonal	single member district systems cabinet style government Government concrete persons and personalities

He is careful to comment (p.103)

First, it cannot be assumed (as we have seen at length) that ideals are meant to be interpreted literally. Second, there is no single nor simple way of deriving concrete implications from abstract principles.

Empirical theories of democracy are by definition limited. They relate to their own particular boundaries both cultural and societal. They may relate more to form than substance in an effort to justify the existence of something which may be believed to be or viewed as intrinsically good'. As a result they can only be partial theories (Stankiewicz, 1980, pp.138-141) as they cannot be applied to other situations and it is argued are therefore inadequate. Empirical democracy theorists attempt to establish models which can be applied. This is patently difficult to do in terms of explaining all aspects relating to the inter-active dynamic nature of particular societies, whether this action has a time-span of days, years or indeed centuries. Such models cannot answer all the questions because of their 'shifting sand nature'.

3.4 Some theories, models and aspects related to democracy

- **Electoral democracy**

The electoral theory of democracy is defined by Sartori (*op cit.*, p.110)

(a) democracy postulates an autonomous public opinion, (b) which sustains, via elections, consented governments, (c) which are in turn responsive to the opinions of the public.

The concept of 'consented governments' is an important one. Even if electors have not voted for a particular party or candidate, the norm is that the overall winner(s) have the right to govern until the next opportunity to attempt to remove them arrives ie the next election. It is a fact (sad or otherwise) that many people provided with the opportunity, take little interest in public affairs even to the extent of not voting in elections - this apathy or lack of interest given the struggle for universal suffrage is commonplace in a range of societies, although it should be noted that several systems have introduced a series of fines or penalties if an elector

fails to vote eg Australia.

Sartori (*op cit.*, p.109) states " ... that it is only in a weak sense that elections tell how to govern; primarily they establish who shall govern."

How does a voter vote? Three limited models are proposed:

1. issue voting model ie vote for the candidate closest to one's own stance on an issue.
2. party identification model ie self image of political leanings transferred to the political party of 'best fit'.
3. trusting the image model ie voting for a particular candidate because one trusts them to do 'good' or to exercise similar views to your own - the influence of mass media and image manipulation is brought to bear on this model.

This is not to argue that electors are powerless between elections. Eulau and Prewitt (1973) argue that during the period between elections a substantial degree of activity occurs between representative and represented. Illustrations are the use of surgeries held by MPs and local councillors, the range of interest and pressure groups who lobby politicians seeking to influence policy-making, and in extreme cases the use or suggested use of referenda. Eulau and Prewitt (1973, p.21) refer to referenda as "sporadic and cumbersome" to use, but not everyone need participate in a referendum therefore its directness is limited. They suggest strongly that accountability and responsiveness result in direct linkages between electors and elected occurring between elections and that these linkages are better placed to be more effective than referenda. The smaller the constituency the easier the contact between electors and elected, and that is most relevant to school boards.

Mayo (1960) is alert to other possible models of 'ruling' which do not necessarily mirror democratic principles eg co-option by an elite which would mean a further restriction in franchise in our current system and a restriction of those eligible for office. Co-option is an established feature of school boards.

- **Vertical democracy**

Electoral democracy can be viewed as horizontal democracy because it provides a foundation for government or the State. Vertical democracy is a system of government. The vertical structure is representative but additional questions are raised; the most basic by Sartori (p.132) ie how does majority rule wind up, in the end, as minority rule? He answers this question by discussing the term 'rule', preferring leadership as a more appropriate and weaker term in relation to and qualified by democracy and suggests this seeming contradiction is in the use of words and meanings. 'Majority' itself is a problematic concept in democracy because if such exists then it may prove despotic or tyrannical. Democratic dictatorship as a possibility and reality has been recognised by various 'theorists'; minorities can function as controlling groups particularly in the vertical structure of societies - those 'at the top' have power! Equally those at the top may be toppled in elections and any temporary tyranny can be ended. This again can lead us into discussion of elite theory and the work of such authors as Schumpeter once more.

- **Referendum democracy**

This form allows the *demos* to decide issues directly via the instrument of a referendum. Sartori argues that this form of democracy brings together and merges direct and representative democracy, although a qualification

is revisited in his discussion of the size of a direct democracy; the essence of the argument here is that direct democracy is limited by size and with respect to referenda it is unlikely that the agenda will be formulated by a direct democracy.

- **Competitive theory of democracy**

This refers to Schumpeter's definition and new theory of democracy already quoted on p.39 of this work. In his commentary on this theory, Sartori (p. 156) suggests

Democracy is the by product of a competitive method of leadership recruitment

and then explains what he means by stating that

Large-scale democracy is a procedure and/or a mechanism that (a) generates an open polyarchy whose competition on the electoral market (b) attributes power to the people and (c) specifically enforces responsiveness of the leaders to the led.

The term polyarchy is used in the mode of Dahl (1956) where the term democracy is retained to describe the 'ideal system' and polyarchy used to express the real world approximation. This form of responsiveness to the people ie the ruled, Sartori terms "the feedback theory of democracy" (p.152) and he goes on to suggest that the terminology should be "the competitive-feedback theory of democracy ". Sartori is concerned with discussing the place of 'anti-elitist theory' in the context of the competitive theory of democracy in its representative format which he suggests is opposed by participatory theories of democracy. He is critical of both 'camps' but re-establishes a point made earlier

that the polyarchal theory of democracy is, in the main, a descriptive theory that actually explains how democracies work and perform. (p.162)

- **Liberal democracy**

Stankiewicz (1980, p.18) states that liberal democratic theory claims "superiority over other egalitarian-based systems on the ground that it is the one system that is predominantly tolerant and pluralistic". Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, p.6) suggest that

liberal democracy is a system of representative government by majority rule in which some individual rights are nonetheless protected from interference by the state and cannot be restricted even by an electoral majority.

Democracies need not be liberal nor is a liberal democracy equivalent to majority rule. Lively (1975, p.79) argues that liberal democracies are sustained by a commitment by the elite to democratic values and that these democratic values must be respected by the elites in a liberal democracy or it crumbles into a form of totalitarianism or democratic dictatorship. Dunleavy and O'Leary (*op cit.*, pp. 136-202) consider the impact of elite theory on liberal democracy, and suggest a more sceptical approach by the supporters of elite theory viz that liberal democracy is better than the alternatives, particularly Marxism, but is still inadequate and therefore dependent on the skills and knowledge of elites. It may not be a question of accepting democratic values but a reality of manipulating and negotiating power bases.

Sartori (*op cit.*, p.383) suggests "... that it is the task of liberal-democratic systems to combine liberty with equality". This establishes that there is a conceptual and practical difficulty when loosely juxtapositioning liberty and

equality. Equality and liberty can be at odds and there is inherent tension.

As Sartori sums up

In the final analysis, equality has a horizontal urge, whereas liberty has a vertical impetus. (p.384)

Empirically it may be claimed that liberal democracies have capitalist economies as a prerequisite; little evidence in liberal democratic traditions is available of any transformation to a mode of production other than capitalist although Allende's short lived triumph in Chile in 1970 demonstrates that not all electoral outcomes are necessarily capitalist; this same example illustrates that peaceful transformation to alternative modes may not be permitted by elites with vested interests. The question of allegiance to democratic principles only while they return 'acceptable' results is a spectre overshadowing considerations of democratic theory and form.

- **Consociational democracy**

There can be alternatives to 'majority rule' democracy also known as the Westminster model, particularly in societies which have major divisions perhaps of a religious or ethnic type. Joint consensus approaches are adopted in such a model. This is not analogous to respect for minorities and their rights which can still mean non-sharing of rule. The outcome of such a model is that minorities are included in the process of ruling be they religious, ethnic etc. With regard to school boards, the allocation of electoral membership to specified categories applies, especially for parents and teachers.

3.5 Indicators of democracy

Verba *et al.* (1978, p.29) discuss criteria for measuring the degree of political democracy and Lively (1975) in concluding his discussion of the meaning of democracy (pp.49-51) provides a useful summation of some of the ends of democracy. I choose to use the word indicator deliberately, rather than suggest that certain attributes of a system termed democratic may be principles.

Indicators of democracy appear to be:

- involvement by citizens
- competitive elections
- competitive and organised political parties or groupings
- peaceful and measured transfer of power between 'winners and losers'
- extensive suffrage
- direct participation or through representatives
- 'rule' or decision-making by the majority
- opinion seeking devices
- opinion making devices
- a genuine free press
- decision-making systems
- concern for minorities
- genuine electoral control over selection of leaders including a
- capacity to remove those who rule
- two-way information flows - feedback systems
- appropriate use of the 'exception principle'
- pluralistic approaches
- the right of opposition
- systems of 'checks' - accountability
- debating of issues
- rights of information flow and opportunity to comment by citizens
- distinction between long-term planning and more limited detailed decisions
- right to put forward views and make representations

3.6 Representative democracy

I have suggested that representative democracy is the most common form of indirect democracy and that it assumes a variety of guises both in form and structure.

Wringe (1984, p.10) in a discussion on the classical theory of democracy and liberal democracy remarks:

As society becomes more complex the good citizen is, on this theory, supposed to keep himself informed about all matters relating to community affairs, take part in local and national election campaigns, lobby his representatives on matters of importance and ensure that representatives are well briefed on the wishes of himself and other citizens.

It is evident in these remarks that representation is two-fold; there is a role for the represented and the representer. Defining such roles in terms of approaches and behaviours has provided much of the literature on representation. Sartori (1987, p.111) suggests that

Representative democracy can simply be defined ... as an indirect democracy in which the people do not themselves govern but elect representatives who govern them. As for the relation between electoral and representative democracy, it will suffice to note that the former is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition of the latter.

Madison (1966, No. 10, p.21) views political representation as delegation of government to "a small number of citizens elected by the rest". Eulau and Prewitt (1973, p.399) do not find it so simple a task to provide definitions and suggest three approaches for enquiry into the meaning of the term representation viz

1. consider the alternative arguments regarding what representatives ought to do;
2. analyse the term with respect to language usage;
3. consider the institutional arrangements which produce representative government.

While not over relying on Eulau and Prewitt despite its recognised eminence in this field of study, and by considering a limited literature on this theme, I will attempt to conduct an investigation in similar terms.

Representative democracy exists partly because of the perceived unwieldiness of direct democracy, and partly because of historical reliance on various forms of 'representation'. The term representation has substantial politico-historical antecedents (Sartori *op cit.*, pp.28-30) despite its current association with democracy in the 'popular' mind. It has been argued that it can be traced back to Greek and Roman antiquity (Larsen, 1955), but Sartori contests this.

Pitkin (1969) argues that political representation as a duty (not a right) at the courts of some monarchs existed, but had little to do with democracy. This did evolve however with Parliament, in the British sense, emerging with ever enlarging claims of 'speaking for the people'; this despite this writer's view that the evidence suggests that 'interests' more than people were 'represented' until after the Great Reform Act of 1832. The move from single agent ie the monarch, to an agency involving King and Parliament began to be linked with notions of democracy in the 17th century. Such flowering of the modern concept began in the English Civil War period but only became institutionalised in the 19th century. As Pitkin

notes (p.4), representation became "one of the universal 'Rights of Man'". Indeed, representation became institutionalised via the extension of suffrage and the detailed consideration of electoral systems - representation became synonymous with democracy in the political and the popular mind and the major problem seems to have been "how to engineer a really efficient machine of representation" (Pitkin, 1969, p.5). As I have noted above such notions are under serious reconsideration if not challenge as direct participation rather than a representative model is suggested as a positive force for good and development within democracies. Representation has been around for some time; it is regarded by some as the only way in which democracies can function in an age where size prohibits face-to-face activity; by others as the kernel of political life but what of its theory?

- **Representation theory**

Nelson (1980, pp.69-71) appends a note on the Theory of Representation in which he asserts,

It cannot be said that there is agreement among theorists about when a government is representative or about when one individual represents another.

Pitkin agrees (*op cit.*, pp.6-7) and suggests,

... representation theory presents a disappointing picture. For what is, in a way, most striking about the theoretical literature in this field, is the persistence of puzzling, seemingly irresolvable conflicts and controversies.

Nelson, (*op cit.*, p.69) poses several questions worthy of consideration

when questioning the nature of representation which he understands to be that one person represents another when one acts for the other in the sense of 'acting in the interest of'. Nelson queries

First, when is it true that one person represents another in this sense? Must my representative act on my opinion of my interests, or on his own opinion? When is it true that an individual represents a constituency, where the constituency may consist of persons with diverse interests?

Pitkin adds that there is little agreement on what representation means or on its physical manifestations. Such questions and controversies rage around notions of distinguishing representative government from other forms; equally it is argued that an effective government by definition must represent the people who are governed; while the conduct and/or role of representatives provides differing viewpoints on working from one's own position, to concepts of trusteeship, acting as a delegate with its myriad meanings etc.

- **Some theorists of representation**

The concerns of Nelson resonate with other writers' work; Pitkin considers a number of theoretical stances regarding representation and (p.8) suggests that Hobbes is a "theorist of representation" although he is concerned with an analysis of effective government and sovereignty. Hobbes (she notes) argues that a representative is someone who acts with authority in the name of someone else, while the representative acts, the represented bears the responsibility. Any acts done by the representative have to be considered to have been carried out by the original authoriser. The representative has limits of authority but is free to act as he/she sees fit within such limits. Such a definition of representation

does not include the important concern that a representative should be held responsible and indeed must be accountable for his actions. Lively (1975, p.127) reflects, "Accountability is valuable because it is a powerful antidote to the corrupting effect of power".

While Eulau and Prewitt's "theory of electoral accountability" (p.406) provides an important theoretical dimension and practical advice in relation to an understanding that representation is concerned with doing and being accountable to those who are governed for this doing. This introduces a new facet of representation viz that representatives have new duties and responsibilities, but this approach, despite its recognised value, does not provide any suggested means for qualitative judgements on how a representative is supposed to act while engaged in representing. Representation may also be considered as not necessarily acting for someone but as a substitute for absence.

Subsequent arguments for different forms of representation such as proportional representation or descriptive representation provide us with an interesting perspective. ie that to be truly representative, an accurate map is required and that a legislature for example should emulate such a map in miniature, or be a faithful reflection of the varying parts of society including numerical parity. This view is concerned with the idea of representativeness or typicality; Eulau and Prewitt (*op cit.*, p.401) describe this as "a term which stresses the characteristics of the membership of governing bodies." This suggests that it is not what a person "does but what he is, or is like" that is important. Hill (1974, pp. 137-39) argues that characteristics of local council representatives are well known eg they are older, more educated on average and so the degree to

which they could claim to be 'representative' demands scrutiny. The skills such people possess and the values they bring to the task may well be unrepresentative of the population at large; this is not denying the commitment and expertise they may bring to government but essentially they are of an elite even if their political persuasion, which in turn they are representing, denies a role for elite rule.

The problems of depiction in relation to representing are touched upon by Eulau and Prewitt. The representative legislature may be inanimate, but once one accepts the requirement of depicting or creating a representation, the representative becomes active in the sense of representing constituents in terms of them having needs, views, preferences and interests; it is the duty of the representative to articulate such. The resemblance or reflection arguments are marshalled once more when discussing representative government as the best possible alternative to direct democracy. Representatives are thus concerned with action which is a substitute for direct action by the people.

The possibility of fascist representation exists when one considers that representation can be symbolic. This does not require any sense of resemblance but does involve political personalities imbued with charisma and affective influence and power over people. Dictators can please, appeal to and satisfy the people but such personalities are imposing their will on the people rather than the opposite which is one intended outcome of representation.

- **Modes of representation**

Eulau and Prewitt provide extensive overviews of the concepts of

representation as *trusteeship*,
representation as *responsiveness*.

Trusteeship

They describe the tension in such "classical interpretations of representation" as being concerned with 'mandate' and 'independence'. The trustee approach recognises independence of judgement as more important than meeting the wishes of a constituency ie putting the general public interest first. Edmund Burke was the first major defender of such an independent approach. Pitkin (1969) quotes Burke extensively and on p.175, Burke suggests that a representative should communicate closely with his constituents, offering respect and weight to their opinions,

But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man ...
Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

Burke provides no support for the mandate approach to representation.

Eulau and Prewitt highlight consequences of adopting a trustee approach. They suggest (p.411) that such trustee representatives should be prepared and willing to defy the majority when necessary, while resisting "the claims of specific interest groups in the community". What is the rationale for such action? The defiance of majority will is predicated on the electorate or public, the citizenry at large, as being too ill-informed or seeking short term benefits, and therefore their preferences being perhaps against the public interest in the long term. There exists the belief that

'what is best' is more important than meeting the people's expressed will. Majorities have been wrong in the past and may be in the future, therefore such a stance can be sustained. On the other hand it may be based on simple opposition to public demands, this would be the situation if a bureaucracy (common to representative democracies) regarded its own position as paramount - a concern which Abrahamsson (1977) enlarges upon.

Pressure groups and interest groups abound in modern day society, and the tendency for representatives to relate differently to such groups is strong. Resistance to such pressures in order to maintain the independence of representatives is required in the trustee mode. However Eulau and Prewitt (p.417-18) discern a trend suggesting that representatives who are high on the trustee scale actually "trade off majoritarian preferences for the preferences of the clientele". They argue that

It is the paternalistic element in trusteeship which allows a council to rationalize a harmony of interests between what is judged to be the general welfare, and what is preferred by a clientele.

The major aspects of trusteeship are summarised (*op cit.*, p.422-23).

- some elements of elitism inevitably are part of trusteeship while this is potentially beneficial, there is a 'dark side' in meeting specific interests
- equally elements of paternalism exist
- it may be a realistic mode of representation because it accepts that mandate approaches are uncertain and untenable in modern day

representative democracies and guarantees minority rights and the general good will.

Responsiveness

Moving away from the notion of trusteeship and the "mandate versus independence controversy", Eulau and Prewitt attempt to formulate an alternative approach. They suggest (p.424) three criteria to be met in such a formulation:

- the relationship between represented and representer should be illuminated
- behaviours should be specific and observable
- the focus should be on the properties of representation which recognise the collective and which are not attributable to the individual ie it is intergroup - citizens and representatives rather than between individuals. Group structures, processes and related interaction are of primary importance.

They accept the definition of representation provided by Pitkin (1967, p.209) who suggests "... representing here means acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to them." This form of representation is regarded as substantive with behavioural attributes. The behaviour between elected and electors is paramount but it has to emerge; it may not occur without specific action by the parties involved. How then may such responsiveness occur?

Non-responsive representative bodies were identified by Eulau and Prewitt, such bodies not acting in ways which respond to the represented. In those which were found to be responsive, two clear types emerged from their empirical study:

- those representative bodies which considered "the views and expressed preferences of attentive publics" by which they mean clearly identifiable and permanent interest groups. The key word here being 'interest' ie they respond to those who demonstrate such interest.
- those representative bodies which considered it important to deal with "transitory issue-groups" ie responding to *ad hoc* issue groups.

Responsiveness involves relations between the representative and the represented. A non-responsive representative body may reflect a contented citizenry, or a compliant public or a public which when it articulates its position is satisfied by that act alone and does not require the representers to do as they have wished; the ultimate is of course a quiescent public. Responsiveness in representers will include a number of different response styles eg standing up to the majority, serving particular interest groups - transitory or not - or 'running errands for constituents'.

Depending on sub-mode certain implications follow:

- a. A non-responsive body can legitimize their approach by claiming they serve the interest of the silent majority better by not responding if faced with particular interest group demands.
- b. For responsive bodies, it is those who speak out which are heard and have influence, therefore it follows that such a body cannot always or consistently act in the majority interest.
- c. The 'running errands' syndrome demonstrates the place of

responsiveness in a spectrum of activities potentially undertaken by the representer.

- d. Linkages between the governors and the governed are important after representers have been chosen and how they react after the public expresses its preference.

3.7 Participatory democracy

Participatory democracy has gained prominence in developed nations in the last few decades and school boards may be viewed as a mechanism to extend such participation.

- **Some definitions and their difficulties**

The meaning of the word 'participation' in an everyday sense presents few problems (Parry, 1972), as meaning taking part or having a share with others in some form of action. In political terms, participation is a more problematic concept. Carole Pateman (1970) suggests that

The widespread use of the term in the mass media has tended to mean that any precise, meaningful content has almost disappeared; 'participation' is used to refer to a wide variety of different situations by different people.

She does amplify the concept as 'participation in decision-making' and states that the term participation is used

to cover almost any situation where some minimal amount of interaction takes place, often implying little more than that a particular individual was present at a group activity.
(*ibid.*,p.68)

Boaden, Goldsmith, Hampton and Stringer (1982, p.11) amplify on the confusion surrounding the term and remark that "Participation is a chimeric word, capable of meaning many things to many people." Beattie (1985, p.3) writes of "... the vagueness of the concept of participation and its use as an exhortatory slogan". More recently still, Sartori (1987, p.111) asserts "...the notion of participatory democracy remains, to date, fuzzy..."

Participation can encompass many possible approaches. A range of possibilities may be suggested:

- as doing or being physically involved as distinct from intellectual involvement which may or may not remain passive;
- as observing in terms of acquiring more knowledge and learning about what is going on in terms of process and content or alternatively 'watching' for a particular purpose;
- as evaluating with its stronger efficacy or effectiveness measuring role;
- as lobbying political representatives or officers charged with the execution of the political will;
- as receiving in terms of being given an account or information;
- as sharing expertise or contributing a perspective or viewpoint;
- as consulting or being consulted about views and opinions;
- as giving of oneself, again in terms of time or experience or skill or knowledge or perhaps of a particular value system, beliefs or indeed prejudices;
- as being responsible directly (or indirectly?) for particular decisions or courses of action;
- as being involved via some aspect of interest (self-interest too),

- perhaps as consumer or producer or in a guardian role;
- as influencing policy making and decision-making or general approaches to the task(s) in hand;
- as agitating for specific decisions or policy directions;

It should be noted that the above possibilities are not exhaustive and that they subsume questions of degree. Degree of involvement will vary and change the nature of such involvement almost by definition. As Parry writes "Political participation is not to be seen as an undifferentiated activity but involves many activities" (1972, p.8). He also notes that certain modes of participation require greater or lesser skills and that electoral systems are relatively simple participative devices; policy shaping or implementation on the other hand requires greater amounts of time, commitment and skills. Finally, participation may be at different levels or 'layered'. Abrahamsson (1977, p.186) when discussing "industrial democracy" defines participation thus "By participation I shall mean the involvement of employees in decision-making on different levels of an organisation."

- **Democracy related to participation**

Democracy itself is defined in the dictionary as being direct government by the people or representative government. As Lively (1975, p.8) comments that

... merely to state the simple definition is to run immediately into a host of definitional ambiguities. If democracy is the rule of the people, what constitutes 'rule' and what 'the people'?

Participation might be regarded as a sub-set of democracy or alternatively

it may be viewed as the keystone of democracy. We are immediately faced with the middle ground that forms part of the continuum discussed above; ranging from consulting the people to influencing by the people. There may be a number of principles which might relate to democracy such as participation, in any or all of its meanings, or 'majority rule' or 'political equality' or 'popular control over decision-making' eg at the ballot box as noted earlier in this Chapter. Lively (1975, p.1) in suggesting that his book was attempting to define democracy remarked also that "... the word has a thriving life in the world of practice as well as the world of theory" and Nelson (1980, p.2) when considering what democracy is at a conceptual level, is concerned not with

questions of definition nor justification, taken in isolation, but instead on what I shall call theories of democracy.

Such theories of democracy require some examination.

- **'Participatory democracy'**

Pateman (1970) initially discusses influential writers on democratic theories such as Schumpeter, Berelson and Sartori; their views on the limited role of participation in the 'democratic method' are outlined. Such 'contemporary' theories are largely theories of representative government and they suggest that the role for the citizen is one of "voting and discussion" or that, "...limited participation and apathy have a positive function for the whole system by cushioning the shock of disagreement, adjustment and change," (*ibid.*,p.7) or that, "... the active participation of the people in the political process leads straight to totalitarianism." (*ibid.*, p.11) She sums up this approach as

... the participation of the minority elite that is crucial and the non-participation of the apathetic, ordinary man lacking in the feeling of political efficacy, that is regarded as the main bulwark against instability. (p.104)

Abrahamsson (1977, p.200) states, "The prime political act by the citizen, therefore, is the election of representatives" and describes this as a "theory of democratic elitism". He suggests (*ibid.*, p.202) that "Participation, then, is the main variable that separates the "radical democrats" from the "democratic elitists." White (1981, pp.176-179) offers an alternative conception to Schumpeter's contention that a characteristic of democracy is competition for leadership. She argues that periodic elections etc. allow individuals to act as responsible moral agents who can and do call government or their bureaucratic agents to account for actions authorised by individual voting. Representative democracy, an equally problematic concept, is a form of participation; Eulau and Prewitt (1973, p.11) in their theoretical discussion of governance, describe participative democracy as direct democracy and recognise (*ibid.*, p.24) that "Representative democracy means that citizens have an opportunity to participate in governance". (Representation was more fully discussed above (3.6)).

As Cook and Morgan (1971, p.2) observe, the origins of the two terms - participation and democracy - illustrate their political dimension eg the Latin *partis* (part) and *capere* (to take) combined with the Greek *demos* (people) and *kratein* (to rule) suggests a definition of "taking part in rule by the people." They proceed to offer a definition that illustrates 'recent' thinking, advised presumably by the events of the late sixties including student unrest in higher education, concern with which also typifies some

writings of that particular time associated with the concept:

... participatory democracy connotes decentralization of power for direct involvement of amateurs in authoritative decision-making. (*ibid.*,p.4)

Participation therefore challenges tendencies towards elitism and centralism in politics a concept especially relevant to school boards.

Hampton (1977, p.28) describes the Skeffington Committee as defining participation "as the act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals." This is a view shared by Jacques (1974, p.295) who strongly suggests:

... participation is concerned not with management in the active sense... but with setting the policies, limits and objectives within which management is carried out.

- **Theoretical aspects of 'Participatory democracy'**

Pateman (1970) in considering the 'participatory theory of democracy' argues that the work of three seminal writers in the field - Rousseau, J.S. Mill and G.D.H. Cole is central to the theory. The essence of Rousseau's ideal participatory system according to Pateman (pp.22-27) involves:

- participation in decision-making and,
- protecting private interests and providing good government which mirrors theories of representative democracy
- educating and developing the human character through such participation to consider the interests of others - this is one of the most important justifications for any participative system.

Pateman discusses the close connection between freedom and control in

Rousseau's theory, suggesting that a unifying strand is that a function of participation is to enable collective decisions to be more readily accepted by the individual. Equally it enhances feelings of 'belonging'; to a community. In this way the individual is an integral part of her society. Such ideas therefore make up the basis of the theory of participative democracy viz

... there is an interrelationship between the authority structures of institutions and the psychological qualities of individuals, and with the related argument that the major function of participation is an educative one. (*ibid.*, p.27)

Pateman (*ibid.* , pp.27-44) reviews the work of J.S. Mill and G.D.H. Cole, whose theories are removed from the "city-state of peasant proprietors" envisaged by Rousseau, and placed in modern political systems. Mill's vision included an educative role for government and political institutions, therefore central to Mill's argument is the need to learn democratic behaviour which would result in a representative democracy with the "instructed" or "the wisest and best men" acting as the ruling elite who have the confidence of the many. Mill's vision of society does not favour the principle of political equality espoused by Rousseau, indeed his definition of participation is a representative one in which discussion was the paramount consideration ie discussion of possible legislation prepared by special commissions. This approach to central government does not suggest a major participative role for the citizen, but the emphasis on local participation is an important contribution to the theory. Equally important was Mill's view of participation in industry as a means whereby the individual could gain significant experience in collective affairs.

Cole's works such as *Social Theory* and *Self-Government in Industry* illuminate his general philosophy and approach. Pateman (pp.35-41) carefully analyses Cole's work, particularly *Guild Socialism*. Cole's theory is concerned with the associations in which individuals are members and argues that individuals to be self-governing must be able to participate in all such associations which as associations must remain free to control their own affairs (Pateman, p.36). This theory of association "... is linked to his theory of democracy through the principle of function." (*ibid.*,p.37) Cole argues that representative government is necessary in most associations, but asserts that current formats of representative government are inadequate.

It should be the aim of those who strive to direct the course of social organisation to promote the fullest participation of everybody in the work of government. This alone is true democracy, and this can only be secured by the fullest development of functional organisation
(Cole 1920, *Social Theory*, p.114)

This assumes that an individual can

... be represented as a whole and for all purposes instead of his being represented in relation to some well-defined function.
(Pateman, p.37)

Equally in relation to existing parliamentary institutions the elector has no control or real choice in relation to his representative. Having chosen, the individual exists to be governed. Cole advocates a system of functional representation whereby individuals would participate in fields and areas of direct concern and in the context of this study this would apply to school

boards; this is his vision of a participatory society which encompasses not just 'politics', "but to any and every form of social action". He argued that functional associations can have a continuous existence which permit them to go on advising, criticising, recalling their representative etc.; this improves the quality of representation and improves on the delegation of authority principle to a ruling elite. This would appear to have all the necessary hallmarks of localised participatory democracy which reflects Abrahamsson's important distinction (1977) that participation is a local level form of democracy as opposed to the larger societal framework of democracy which exists usually in a representative format.

Eulau and Prewitt (1973, p.406) tentatively advance a "theory of electoral accountability" which mirrors the types of participation summarised by Pateman. This "theory" suggests that

... when the public can hold the representatives accountable for what they are doing that a responsive relationship between governors and governed is most likely to occur.

This might assume greater participation by a range of non-elected or elected 'representatives' and might be extended to be concerned with officials as well as 'official' representatives no matter how they are appointed or elected.

Summarising the theory of participative democracy, Pateman (*ibid.*,p.42) asserts that,

1. individuals and institutions are inter-related and cannot be treated in isolation from one another;

2. institutions of national representation are insufficient for democracy;
3. social training for democracy is required and the process of participation promotes this; practice means that people become better at decision-making and have a concern for others within the collective;
4. equality is a watchword in participatory democracy and opportunities to participate in decision-making must be a function of all authority structures.

Pateman (*ibid.*, p.43) characterises the participatory model as

... one where maximum input (participation) is required and where output includes not just policies (decisions) but also the development of the social and political capacities of each individual, so that there is 'feedback' from output to input.

Given the range of possible forms of participation, Pateman, following the work of Verba (1961), is careful to distinguish between the different possibilities (*ibid.*, pp.68-71):

1. pseudo-participation or

techniques used to persuade employees to accept decisions that have already been made by the management (*ibid.*, p.68)

2. partial participation or the situation where

the final power of decision rests with the management, the workers if they are able to participate being able only to

influence that decision (*ibid.*, p.70)

3. full participation when

each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions. (*ibid.*, p.71)

Participation is a multi-faceted concept and deeper analysis is necessary to highlight the aims of participation which might reflect the possibilities distinguished above. Pennock (1979), summarising the work of recent theorists of participatory democracy, provides four main reasons for the introduction and /or extension of participation:-

- (i) responsiveness: which will increase communication and flows of information from government while promoting more flexible response to particular needs and requirements.
- (ii) legitimacy: actions and decisions of government are made more acceptable to the masses through participation.
- (iii) personal development: by having some responsibility for matters which affect them, individuals may achieve full moral and intellectual development.
- (iv) overcoming alienation: by bringing individuals together, participation helps them to understand the collective purposes of society.

Such aims are relevant to school boards. Aims (i) and (ii) above reflect an internal drive within institutions to 'open up' perhaps in terms of safeguarding that institution's own future. Contrastingly, aims (iii) and (iv) suggest development for the masses who would not 'normally' be part of the 'association' unless participation were promoted. Beattie (1985, p.5)

also suggests that aims (iii) and (iv) are potentially reformist or even revolutionary. To the above list we may also add ideas such as:-

- the pooling together of ideas
- inequalities might be lessened if ordinary people are involved in this way
- contributing different skills to the overall effort.

Structures and functions of participatory democracy are important (Cook and Morgan, 1971). Once structure is identified, it is essential to determine its function eg is it rule-making or rule-implementing or a mix of both? This is a test of purpose and associated power and may be applied in the analysis of any 'association' which provides a means to engage in decision-making. This leads to notions of the kind of involvement or action which 'participation' can promote; Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge (1980, p.17, 1984, pp.133-135) suggest there are four main 'types of participatory action':

deciding, ensuring, advising and communicating.

Communicating encompasses a range of possibilities and a better expression today, which reflects the spirit of what was said, might be 'informing'. I will return to such types of action when exploring such concepts as 'accountability' for example in Chapter 4.

Opportunities exist in most spheres of activity for individuals to engage in 'participatory democracy'. Theory suggests that participative democracy might work at local levels such as the workplace or a forum such as a school board within the overall framework of what might be termed 'representative democracy' as we know it today in British society.

- **Arguments for citizen participation**

The arguments for participation which Cook and Morgan propound mirror Pateman's analysis of the theories. (*ibid* ., pp.6-16) They emphasise "Participation as a Learning Experience" which they suggest will result in an increased sense of "political efficacy" within individuals - a sense of empowerment and capacity to determine one's destiny or fulfil a need for belonging or community - this is a counterweight in an age of 'big' business and bureaucratization. They also stress "Participation as a Means to Better Decisions". This reflects the Aristotelian idea of collective wisdom. Additionally they argue that participation leads to a 'will' to make "better" decisions because the individuals are 'involved' and not merely functionaries. Protection against tyranny is viewed as a classic argument for participation and the dispersal of power; participation may also prepare us to exercise our moral responsibilities by "relating personal conduct to social consequences". (*ibid.*, p.15)

A summary of the major arguments for participation is offered by Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge (1980, pp. 15-19) in their discussion of the purposes for Scottish School Councils, the forerunners of school boards in Scotland, and augmented by Macbeth (1990, pp.9-15). Some of this discussion and the supporting arguments of the theorists cited, are summarised below:

The general arguments for participation include:

- i. local influence over local issues will act as a counterweight to the remoteness of government, or the tyranny of bureaucracy:

Abrahamsson (1977) in his defence of the concept of 'bureaucracy'

discusses the concept of 'mandator' (pp.24-30), which he differentiates from the term "stakeholder" (cf p.75 of this work), and concludes,

As soon as power is delegated, however, the mandator may find that the administrative apparatus is no longer an obedient instrument.

Again on p.31 he summarises traditional viewpoints of bureaucracy as having in common,

... the fact that they view bureaucratic tendencies, i.e. the transfer of administrative power to a special stratum of experts, as a definite challenge to democratic principles.

While it may be accepted that bureaucracies are a necessary feature of an increasingly complex society (Silverman, 1970), and that both at national and local level, they work generally in the "public interest", there is no doubt that such 'interest' can vary or be influenced, depending on the field of operation eg Kogan, M., Johnson, D., Packwood, T. and Whitaker, T. (1984, p.16) suggest that education professionals can be 'a challenging interest' or modifier of political or bureaucratic leadership . Krause (1968) describes a continuum of bureaucracies ; from "caretaker" through "regulatory" to "action" or "social change" bureaucracies. For some "action" bureaucracies, participation is part of their ideology. They espouse 'participation' in order perhaps to legitimise or increase the acceptability of their decision-making. On occasion 'participation' will mean engaging in the programme being promulgated by the bureaucracy - another form of tyranny? Abrahamsson argues that participation is the means that ordinary citizens have to make bureaucrats more accountable for their use of power. Representatives can be removed from office via the

ballot box, paid officials require other 'watchdog' facilities or active participation by 'amateurs'. This has obvious relevance to school boards.

- ii. decisions should be settled at the lowest appropriate level offering opportunities for influence by those affected by the decision - 'stakeholder' theory and participation as local democracy:

Abrahamsson (1977, pp. 117-118) outlines his definition of 'stakeholders' thus,

The stakeholders of the organisation are those individuals or groups who are dependent on the enterprise for the implementation of their own personal needs, and upon whom the enterprise is dependent for its continued existence.

The outcome of this is that stakeholders should be provided with the means of influencing the decisions made by an organisation. Within a representative structure decisions are still required on who is represented and how. Consideration of the degree of strength of the stake held will influence the 'who' and the 'how' mentioned above. Kogan *et al* (1984, p. 20) citing Arnstein (1965) argue that essentially participation leads to a "... yielding of authority by one body to another and a hierarchy of power at the different levels of participation."

Lucas (1975, p.138) suggests,

Participation is not, as its advocates seem to suppose, all of one piece. It takes different forms, which may be incompatible with one another.

This incompatibility suggests that a range of activity or even a hierarchy is

possible within the concept of participation itself - this ranges in Arnstein's (1965) taxonomy from 'tokenism' or consultation to delegated power or partnership, again indicating the inter-relationship of a range of concepts in this area of study.

The Wheatley Report (1969, p.232, para.968) in the context of local government reform suggested "... issues should be dealt with at the lowest, or most local, level consistent with the nature of the problem involved", and recommended that local bodies be established to allow such participation at a level 'below' regionalisation within Scotland.

The Glasgow University Report (1980, p.16) suggested that

Participation may be seen as a way of reasserting democratic principles at local level. It does not compete with or threaten the authority of politicians and is always subject to it.

This illustrates again that participation can co-exist with representative government and decision-making and does not necessarily usurp it, which is one of the intrinsic arguments against increased participation.

iii. accountability and the enhancement of professional status - exchange bargaining

As accountability and professionalism are discussed in Chapter 4, I shall concentrate here on 'exchange bargaining'. Blau (1964, p.4) in his work on "Exchange and power in social life" stresses that "A person for whom another has done a service is expected to express his gratitude and return a service when the occasion arises." He goes on to argue that

Social exchange as here conceived is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding actions from others and that cease when these expected reactions are not forthcoming.
(*ibid.*, p.6)

This concentration on social exchange is not amiss despite the fact that economic exchange bargaining may be more apposite in relation to arguments for participation. 'Associations' comprise individuals who can be 'socialised' into specific behaviours by acceptance of social mores accepted by those already in the 'association'. In a previous work (Blau and Scott, 1963) the case was made to regard organisations as systems of inter-related behaviours of people; the organisation gives inducements and receives contributions in return. Kogan *et al* (1984, p.16) in their discussion of exchange theory and resource dependency theory suggest,

Essentially, it views social and political actions as a process of exchange and within a political model in which relationships between levels of government form a complex network of institutions, interest groups, and the like.

Such bargaining and/or interaction may result in the professionals having their status enhanced because of the quality of advice and expertise they offer or as a result of the well placed trust in them to execute the wishes of the 'association'. The GU Report (1980, p.17) suggests that an emphasis on accountability rather than professional autonomy may be a potential benefit from schemes of participation. Such accountability reassures the client that they are obtaining a genuine service and value for money (aspects which dominate certain current political ideologies).

- iv. the provision for a forum and focus for local community groups including accessing local expertise and mirroring the pluralist society we live in.

Society is complex and various groups reflecting local variation may require to be represented, particularly minorities. Associated with this is the idea of tapping local expertise for the benefit of the wider community. Particular interest groups will have an opportunity to press their views - the danger here is of course that particular views may be considered unrepresentative of a community or that specific influence is afforded undue importance by officials because it may correspond with the particular set of objectives held at that time.

The GU Report (1984, p.95) reflects changes in society which demand more participation "...the last two decades have witnessed new emphases upon rights (especially of minority groups and individuals), pluralism".

Lady Plowden (1988, p.261) concludes:

We have passed the point where it was thought that the state could provide all the services which the community needed. We have now reached the point where the community with help can provide so much for itself.

The GU Report (p.18) also suggests that there can be alternative and devious reasons for participation eg as a diversionary tactic encouraging participants to deal with peripheral concerns from which they may gain 'participatory' satisfaction, or "... to function as a buffer between the public and a public service organisation".

There are of course arguments *against* participation. The GU Report (pp.20-21) offers nine such arguments including *usurping of political authority at local level* (cf p.76 above) to *unwarranted lay interference in professional matters, participants as unrepresentative, and participants being unprepared or not possessing appropriate skills*. These were all raised as major concerns when the proposals for school boards were first introduced (cf. Chapter 8).

3.8 Participation and schools

Governing bodies, boards or councils currently exist in most western European countries and the position of parents as participants, elected by fellow parents and not nominated by the LEA or co-opted by an existing governing body, on such bodies has developed over the past few decades.

In the late sixties and early seventies there was an apparently radical change in the position of parents as governments began to implement various schemes for increased citizen participation in decision-making...These changes centred on the idea that democracy should be extendedThe vagueness and elasticity of the participatory ideal was part of its attractiveness, but in practice it usually involved attempts to transfer some aspects of decision-making to lower levels of the political and administrative hierarchy and to secure wider representation... on the resultant committees.

(Beattie, N., 1985, p.3)

In the light of the general arguments for participation, it is suggested that participation in the administration and management of schools can ensure an element of accountability of public servants, and can offer substantial benefits for pupils, for professional staff and for parents and the

community by reducing remoteness from decision-making.

Also included in the GU Report are additional arguments specific to schooling in favour of participation. These might be summarised as:

- a. Legal responsibility for their child's education rests with parents.
- b. Schools do not alone, educate children. Parents and the community also contribute.
- c. Parental attitudes may influence children's school achievement. Participation may help to encourage parent -teacher contact.
- d. Discernible moves towards participatory management in schools affect the role of the head teacher.
- e. Modelling democratic processes for young persons in school in order to promote knowledge and understanding of democratic processes.

Additionally, in a later section, the Report noted that:

- f. Teachers should be participants because their daily lives are affected.
- g. Senior pupils equally may have claims to participate.

This is debated by Walker (1990, p.93) and he poses interesting questions about the "current practice of regarding teachers as 'stake-holders'".

Such specific arguments are largely related to parental participation in school management but arguments c, d and e also relate to

representatives of the wider community which might include local business, the Churches, community groups or associations and the elected local authority which has statutory obligations in relation to the management of schools. In addition, teachers and perhaps their professional organisations should be participants in the management of such a public service, while senior pupils or students should participate as they 'come of age' to represent themselves and no longer require representation via parents.

These general and schooling specific arguments for participation have generally proved acceptable and are rarely publicly challenged although as noted on p.79 above there are arguments commonly encountered against participation. Increased participation at school level has therefore become the ' norm' in the western democracies. It has not been without attendant difficulties and criticisms, as there is sometimes little consensus or agreed understanding among the various representative participants about roles, purposes and therefore functions and actions to be pursued.

3.9 School boards as a structure for the application of democratic theories

The development of opportunities for local involvement in affairs and government by citizens is viewed as a counter-weight to the perceived remoteness of the representative system which determines national and local government in the UK. School boards offer opportunities for the application of theories of participative and representative democracy at a local level. Involvement in decision-making is possible in a field of activity directly associated with local communities; school boards can provide a learning experience and increase knowledge and appreciation of democratic values; elections allow the selection of representatives; boards

involve a range of 'stakeholders' etc. The structure of boards also allow public servants to be locally accountable and that plus the concepts of professionalism and bureaucracy is discussed in the next Chapter.

Bureaucracy, professionalism and accountability

This chapter examines three concepts related to democracy viz.

bureaucracy

professionalism

accountability

Each concept is commented upon briefly in general terms, and subsequently with increasing emphasis on applicability to schooling. A final section of the chapter relates these concepts to democracy and to participation in school management and administration through school boards.

Bureaucracy, professionalism and accountability

4 Theoretical aspects of bureaucracy, professionalism and accountability

4.1 Introduction

School boards interact with (and are part of) educational bureaucracy; they deal with an occupational group claiming professional status (teachers); and one justification for school boards is that they can call schools to account. The concepts of bureaucracy, professionalism and accountability are all central to the study of school boards.

Democracy, despite of or because of its many forms and shades discussed in Chapter 3, is susceptible in modern industrial societies to centralisation and the use of public servants to carry out the wishes of the people or their representatives. Jacques (1976, p. ix) refers to “the unfortunate tendency of industrial societies to bureaucratize everything”. These administrators and others exist at national and local levels and are often viewed as essential to the good order, management and provision of the ‘state’ or government. Related concerns associated with the rise of bureaucracies and their political and social functions are the concepts of the professionalism of those who find themselves as ‘bureaucrats’ or working for the bureaucracy and the accountability of such unelected officials in a democratic structure, be it representative or participative.

4.2 Bureaucracy

Albrow (1970, p.16) documents the 18th century invention of the term ‘bureaucracy’ but is quick to point out that the concept includes “a very wide variety of ideas”, some emerging from the mists of antiquity. Bottery (1992, p.33), in support, suggests the pyramids at Giza can be seen not only as a feat of civil engineering but also partly as “the product of a

bureaucracy", while Jacques (*op cit.*, pp.17-18) in accepting that bureaucratic hierarchies have existed for some five thousand years, argues that their dominant position in society is a modern development.

- **The nature of bureaucracy**

It has been argued by Abrahamsson (1977) and others that larger organisational groupings and centralised administration tend to result in greater bureaucracy; a possible result of increased bureaucracy can be the alienation of citizens. The term 'bureaucracy' is far from neutral in everyday speech; its pejorative meaning is usually associated with some form of 'illegitimate power'. It has been described as having become an emotional stereotype meaning among other things the interventionist approaches of government or the inefficiency of certain government procedures. Such interpretations may lead us to differentiate between groupings of bureaucrats and the action undertaken by bureaucrats. The classical writers on 'bureaucracy' include Marx who regarded bureaucracy as an instrument of the dominant class ie. capitalist and which he suggested not only alienated society at large, but it also contributed to individual alienation within an organisation.

Yet bureaucracy has been defended, for example by Albrow (*op cit.*, p.91) who refers to it being "compatible with, or even necessary to, democracy" and Weber, whose views and particularly theories have been heavily influential on regarding certain forms of bureaucracy as a form of 'management'. Bottery (*op cit.*, p.36) refers to Schumpeter's work on representative democracy (previously discussed) and suggests that Schumpeter's definition of democracy (cf p.39 Chapter 3) allows the following observation:

Bureaucracy, according to this description, has effects which may seem negative at first, but have an ultimately beneficial outcome.

The concept is difficult to define; even Weber (according to Albrow) while the main theorist of bureaucracy, never defined the term. Albrow (*op cit.*, p.106) states,

The idea of bureaucracy arose out of the concern for the proper place of the official in modern government. We have seen, in particular, how the nineteenth century writers contrasted bureaucracy with democracy. They discerned numerous ways in which the use and usages of public officials subverted democratic values.

Weber did specify “the features of what he considered the most rational form of democracy”, but Abrahamsson (1977) summarises a number of additional interpretations of the term ‘bureaucracy’ based on the comprehensive review of the concept of bureaucracy, including Weber’s writings, by Albrow (1970):

State administration

where the prominence of permanent employed public officials may be noted as an acceptable or otherwise form of government. This situation as indicated above was attacked in the nineteenth century particularly by J S Mill in his writings because of the risk of abuse of power by bureaucracies.

Group of officials

who are identifiably those who carry out administrative tasks for public or private concerns. This was described by Weber as patrimonial bureaucracy; officials with authority. Weber did not include elected officials within this interpretation of bureaucracy. It is important that administration

by non-elected officials ie. paid and contracted officials such as teachers, be distinguished from administration through traditional leaders or groups of citizens for example Albrow (1970, pp.40-49; 98-100) and Jacques (1976, pp. 52-54).

Administrative autocracy

where the exertion of power by officials to implement their own interests is the main attribute (Albrow, 1970 pp.91-92). Michels (1949, p.370) remarks, "... from a means, organization has become an end". The question of who may benefit from the use of power if not the members of the bureaucracy is not answered by this interpretation of the concept. What can be argued is that a bureaucracy can equally exercise power in a way which is of benefit to those who have established and empowered the bureaucracy in the first instance. Alternatively a bureaucracy can adopt a particular ideology eg citizen participation. This adoption allows the bureaucracy to legitimize certain decisions and actions. Krause (1969, p134) also offers an interesting overview on a "... continuum from "caretaker bureaucracies", at one end, to "regulatory bureaucracies" in the middle to "social change" or "action" bureaucracies at the other extreme." Where might educational administrations, especially schools, in this country be placed on such a continuum and what might be the proper role of school boards in relation to them?

Rational organisation

where the interpretation is of Weber's ideal type viz it depicts

a form of organization characterized by a hierarchy of offices, careful specification of office functions, recruitment on the basis of merit, promotion according to merit and achieved

competence, positions salaried according to hierarchical level,
and a coherent system of discipline and control.

(Abrahamsson, *op cit.*, p.17)

This interpretation has been popular with management theorists with their emphasis on effectiveness and at this stage it is interesting to speculate if the school effectiveness and improvement movement, currently in a predominant position with aspects of rational development planning and the use of performance indicators, will lend itself to bureaucratic structures, or perhaps create a new bureaucracy of its own in the shape of quality assurance inspectors? Abrahamsson flags the danger of such 'rational organization' system lacking in efficiency (*ibid* , p.18).

Organisational inefficiency

where the 'popular' interpretation of the concept holds sway. So immersed in red tape are bureaucrats that they cannot learn from mistakes (Albrow 1970, p.90).

Modern organizations

where Abrahamsson claims that Weber's ideal type of bureaucracy can be discerned in the visible characteristics of modern organisations the tendency might therefore be "to equate bureaucracy with organisations in general".

Modern society

Albrow (*ibid* , p.102) argues,

Just as it proved complicated to draw a line between
administration and organization, so it is hard to see where
organization ends and society begins. Hierarchy, rules, division
of labour, careers, qualifications seem to pervade modern

society, and are not simply housed in separate organizations. Perhaps we can speak of organizations as being bureaucratic only because they are part of a wider bureaucracy - modern society itself.

He is later careful to establish the difference between a bureaucratic society where the bulk of a population may support a ruling bureaucratic elite and societies where every member may have a highly "specified organizational role".

Abrahamsson acknowledges that "the concept of bureaucracy is multisided" but suggests it is necessary to concentrate on certain aspects and to differentiate the concrete from the theoretical. At a concrete level he argues that the "administrative system" of an organisation and in particular its effectiveness (*ibid.*, p.26) is a major concern, but links this immediately with the concept of "mandator". By "mandator" Abrahamsson (*ibid.*, p.29) means at the simplest level the initiator (person or group) of an organisation and/or the provider of finance for an organisation's activities. An organisation's administration or bureaucracy it is argued requires to be both effective and representative. This suggests a concern for 'professionalism' despite professionals' claims for autonomy of decision-making which highlights the strains and tensions between professional and organisational loyalties (Blau and Scott, 1963) and 'accountability' which I will return to later.

- **Schools as bureaucracies?**

Are schools bureaucracies and teachers bureaucrats? Despite the differing notions of 'bureaucracy' outlined above and the recognition that it is a difficult concept to define, Watson (1975, p.119) suggested,

It is clear that there are many bureaucratic elements in the secondary school, and many bureaucratic pressures. Offices, such as those of headmaster, head of department and assistant master, are ranked in order, with the superordinate to a large degree responsible for the actions of the subordinate ...

Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge (1980, p.16) in their discussion of the arguments for increased participation by parents in school management and administration, and with a caveat concerning their non-pejorative use of the term bureaucracy, are unequivocal in their definition relating to schools and teachers.

A bureaucracy may be defined as those people employed by an authority to manage and carry out the authority's wishes.

Administrators and teachers in state schools, for instance, are public servants within such a bureaucracy.

Ball (1987, p.101) writing on the politics of school leadership observes

In the managerial mode the emphasis of organizational control is position-orientated rather than person orientated. Information and influence flow through the formal channels and structures.

At each level in the bureaucratic structure the duties and responsibilities are fixed and limited.

A distinction between headteachers/administrators as bureaucrats on the one hand and all teachers as bureaucrats (public servants) on the other has implications for the role of school boards. Of note too for school boards is the concept of structural relativism from organisational theory (Hughes, 1980, pp.244-245) which suggests stable conditions and automatic decisions are 'mechanistic' structures as distinct from 'organic' structures which are more flexible. Board legislation promotes growth and flexibility (cf Chapter 9) but they may operate in a mechanistic way.

4.3 Professionalism

It is sometimes claimed that professionals are distinct from bureaucrats and that this professional status should make them more accountable to their own expertise than to external bodies. That issue warrants critical analysis if teachers are to claim immunity from school board accountability. Professionalism is claimed by teachers. Other occupations (increasingly so) make similar claims and as Shipman (1984, p.128) observes: "The claim to be treated as a profession rests on rather ill-defined criteria." Additional problems relate to the individualistic origins of the concept. Recent developments particularly in the 'growth in public service professionals' (*ibid.*) and the coming together of groups to promote collective self-governance make the claims of individuals relatively untenable; the essence today is to belong to the professional group, but this itself offers difficulty to the observer if autonomy is regarded as paramount. A conventional approach to determine whether a particular occupation is a profession or not, might be to measure the claim against certain criteria eg expertise, service to a client, ethical standards etc. Some commentators regard this as inadequate as some occupations may be stronger on certain criteria compared with others and there is little established agreement about which criteria to be applied. Against what criteria may teachers be assessed?

Hughes (1985, pp.269-273) offers a critique of the trait or characteristics approach to the definition of professionalism suggesting that some characteristics are no more than 'unduly idealistic self-definitions'. It has been suggested that there may be a continuum of professionalism as a result of the relative strength of any individual within a profession against a criteria or the variation between professions on certain criteria. While some writers on education remark upon the ideology of professionalism others differentiate between *professionalism* in terms of theory and

professionalism relating to practice ie the practice of some professionals may be different.

Where might teachers lie in such a continuum? Before attempting to answer such questions a word about usage of terms in this brief discussion is necessary. In concert with Hoyle (1980) and the GU Report (1980), by *professionalism* I mean the qualities of service and obligation which in theory underpin best practice; by *professionalization* I recognise that an occupation engages in a process of becoming a profession; and by *professionalism* I refer to the practice of professionals in relation to their knowledge, skills and procedures which if a continuum exists will of course differ from one professional practitioner to another.

Among the principal criteria which emerge (Shipman, 1984; Hoyle 1980;1986, p.80) are:

- expertise or ensured competence underpinning a professional career
- training, giving a practical skill based on qualification
- altruistic service to others
- responsibility and freedom to make judgements - autonomy
- a code of ethical conduct.

In Scotland, the National Committee for Inservice Teacher Training published a report on staff development (June 1984). This discussed the criteria applicable to the claim of being a profession and suggested that professionals should:

- a. have skills based on an understanding and conscious application of knowledge
- b. not be admitted to the profession until they have successfully completed a long period of initial training and been certificated

- c. be committed to regular updating of knowledge and skills
- d. accept the obligation to serve clients which involves loyalty to certain ethical principles and a sense of responsibility.

The report concluded that the teaching profession meets these criteria - teachers were self-critical; they acted on professional reflection and they accepted the obligation for involvement in staff development.

Expertise or knowledge and training have long been regarded as necessary pre-requisites of the professional. Cogan (1953) offering a definition of professionalism suggests

A profession is a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding...

While Ball (*op cit.*, p.135) comments

... the image it conjures up is of the trained, dedicated and expert practitioner applying specialist skills and esoteric knowledge with considered judgement and flair.

Can teachers claim such expertise and knowledge? Hoyle (1974, 1980) assumes there has been an increasing professionalisation of teachers ie. the dynamic process by which teachers are becoming a profession. Critics of this professionalisation do not accept that it is essential for professional practice to be based on systematic theoretical knowledge. Hoyle asserts that while there may be a theory of teaching, little reference is made to it by teachers in their day-to-day activities, and argues that most practice is determined by

... intuition, experience and commonsense knowledge. It is suggested that this view is held also by teachers themselves. Equally it is argued that there is no clear evidence that theoretical knowledge influences teacher practice but again no clear evidence that it does not!

Professor Hoyle is not alone in suggesting that there has been an increase in the professionalization of teachers but there are associated issues. Bloomer (1980) suggests that there is an intrinsic tension between trade unionism and professionalism. Trade unions exist to protect and advance members' interests and in the 1960s and 70s both employers and teachers felt that an increase in professionalism would be to the advantage of teachers and educational system alike. Such use of the ideology of professionalism on one hand promoted moves towards greater expertise through staff development and training while on the other hand satisfied such other associated attributes of professionalism such as greater financial reward and enhanced status. Despite this, Bloomer asserts that teachers are 'second class' professionals which when added to the lack of mystique about education (everyone has experience of it) and the readily expressed contempt of so many teachers for their own professional preparation and continuing development, not recognising that this does little to raise their professional standing, it is not surprising that there is uncertainty in the claim by teachers to be professional by virtue of specialised knowledge, expertise or training. Such uncertainty is fuelled by other agents and agencies such as the government who are now asserting their role in relation to teachers and from some perspectives are engaged in a campaign to de-professionalise teaching with the introduction of managerialism to schools and the reassertion of control over the curriculum, at least in guideline form eg the National Curriculum in England and Wales and the 5-14 Development Programme in Scotland.

Service to others is the essence of the task for teachers. Few would argue that teaching is not a service but the degree of altruism exhibited will be variable in any group of teachers. The tension of trade unionism and professionalism is evident again when one engages in a discussion of altruistic service. Some would claim that professionalism is more about self-interest than any service to others and the tactics used by teachers during periods of industrial action offer little indication of altruism. It has to be recorded that not all teachers engage willingly in such actions and there is even a 'professional association' which makes certain actions such as striking untenable with membership. Nevertheless it would be churlish to deny that teaching, despite its moments of industrial warfare, is a service.

The question remains of identifying the client of the teacher who is receiving the service. Pupils who are the immediate and direct focus of teacher knowledge and skills could claim to be the client but others have claims too. The parent of the child has a legal responsibility for the education of her child but delegates authority to the teacher. The education authority which employs the teacher and society at large through the offices of the state makes claims on the service of teachers. If a pupil is a minor then this is an attractive client for the teacher requiring little responsiveness in terms of accountability. If some remote authority is the client then accountability becomes distant too unless there is an intermediate agent such as a headteacher to satisfy. With the legal responsibility for her child's education being vested in the parent it would appear necessary to accept that parents are the legal clients of teachers while their children might rightly be regarded as the consumers. This might lead one to consider aspects of partnership and cooperation with parents as essential elements in the armoury of the professional teacher and would certainly highlight the need for accountability by teachers to parents

for the actions and decisions they take in the process of educating children.

Teachers do have responsibility for decisions which affect pupils.

Assessment and grading and the provision of particular courses or approaches for individual or groups of children. Teachers as professionals may offer 'technical' advice at "subject choice" time in S2, but ultimately parents being responsible for a child's education may determine a different course of action. Classroom practices also contain elements of autonomy for teachers as Shipman (1990, p.3) opines in his discussion of management training:

The task of management training is made more difficult by the exclusiveness of classrooms. Teachers... the way they teach is their business.

This provides some difficulty in the sense that teachers are not self-employed and therefore their claims to autonomy require to be tempered by the reality of their increasingly line-managed status in the 'bureaucracy' which employs them. However, Bailey (1980, p.99) argues that it is possible for teachers to act with "... a proper sense of professional responsibility while remaining personally autonomous in their professional actions". While not taking the equivalent of a Hippocratic oath, teachers do belong to a regulatory council in Scotland - The General Teaching Council (GTC) established in 1965 by Act of Parliament to ensure that those admitted to the teaching profession had achieved the required standards, both academic and professional, and to ensure that a required standard of competence in the classroom was demonstrable in the probationary period prior to 'final registration' (Kirk, 1988, pp.93-102). Such a rite of passage into the professional ranks is supplemented by consideration by Council of

serious cases of misconduct but not professional incompetence! Kirk (*ibid.*) argued that 'final registration' is an increasingly insufficient attestation of competence and suggests that the GTC should establish a connection between continuing registration and the successful undertaking of professional development activities. This recognises that there are changes and developments in education which teachers require to familiarise themselves with and additionally personal professional development is important to recognise too. The system of staff development and appraisal introduced to Scottish schools recognises both personal and system development needs, while the 1996 White Paper, *Raising the Standard*, suggested a greater role for the GTC in relation to continuing professional development (CPD); suggestions in 1997 would indicate willingness only now to involve the Council in CPD and assessment of competence. No code of professional conduct exists for Scottish teachers nor is there an agreed list of teacher duties although such lists appear in various forms including one in the Main Report of 1986. Sockett (1980, p.20) argues for detailed codes of conduct including 'codes of classroom conduct'. The question remains: should the only accountability of teachers be to their educational colleagues or ought there to be accountability to or even control by a local democratic process such as school boards?

Against some conventional professional traits or characteristics it may be argued that teachers are on different places of the professional continuum than other occupations claiming professional status. Langford (1978, p.51) concludes

... in the absence of definite evidence one way or the other, there

is scope for difference of opinion about the matter; and my opinion, for what it is worth, is that teaching is a profession.

No clear definition of teacher professionalism exists and this may require to be considered in the light of increasing local democracy in the form of school boards particularly with respect to aspects of accountability.

4.4 Accountability

It may be suggested that the central role of the school board is to provide a locally democratic process by which the school is made accountable to those it serves. Accountability has been a fashionable word in education since the mid 1970s with the onset of the 'Great Debate'. Matthew and Tong (1982, p.39) observe "Accountability is an ugly word, with an apocalyptic ring." It offers both threat and opportunity and this derives from the various meanings of the term. Several educational commentators have offered discussion of the meanings of the term 'accountability' and in particular how it relates to education and schooling (Wagner (1989); McCormick (1982); Macbeth *et al.* (1980); Sockett (1980). Lello (1979, p.10) recognises accountability as a "multi-faceted subject".

It involves reporting to other people voluntarily or compulsorily.
It means having a conscience or a moral responsibility about what you are doing.

Burgess (1994) in common with other authors distinguishes between moral accountability and legal or contractual accountability. Accountability is bracketed with the terms responsiveness and responsibility by Scott (1989), while Wagner (*op cit.*, p.3) highlights other terms which appear associated, synonymous or definitive including 'obligation', and 'entitlement'. This offers a telling insight into current usage and concern

about the term, and I shall reflect on these associated themes in the course of this discussion. Definition of the term 'accountability' cannot be contained in one embracing descriptor.

The Report of the East Sussex Accountability Project quoted in McCormick (1982, p.27) distinguishes three particular facets of accountability, viz

- *answerability* to one's clients :
moral accountability
- *responsibility* to self and one's colleagues :
professional accountability
- strict *accountability* to one's masters (employer or political) :
contractual accountability.

This three-part categorisation appears to exclude accountability to a body of local democracy such as a school board, unless that is implied by accountability to clients or, in an English setting accountability to one's masters ie the governing body.

Sockett (1980) concentrates on two particular meanings of the term important for education, viz holding someone to account and delivering an account. In an educational setting, both interpretations (1980, p.10) are useful to

improve the quality of education, and, it is sometimes added, to
prove that this is being done.

Sockett continues by highlighting the differences between having a capacity to deliver an account and being **obliged** to do so. He distinguishes the roles of provider and agent. The provider, or perhaps as I discussed in Chapter 3, the 'mandator', supplies resources, as a result the agent who uses such resources and makes related decisions about the resources and their use is obliged 'by virtue of a legal contract', or alternatively morally so, to provide an account of stewardship. Wagner (*op cit.*) also discusses "the obligation to account", and analyses the two concepts of *responsibility* and *entitlement*. He distinguishes between the *causal*, *non-causal* and *expectational* senses of the term responsibility, and goes on to argue (p.56) that

Accountability is by no means a necessary consequence of responsibility...

But surely the reverse does not follow. If an agent is to be accountable, he must be accountable for something; and to hold him responsible for an act in this sense of the term presupposes some connection on his part with the act or state of affairs for which he must answer.

Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge (*op cit.*, p.46) offer a description of their use of the term *responsibility* which recognises a requirement to answer to some person or group to which the agent is subordinate and which by means of sanctions or control of circumstances is able to effect its will on the agent. Their use of the term *accountability* is restricted to refer to a more regular public rendering of account on a local basis. Emphasis is placed on local accounting but with the proviso that there are clear lines open to appropriate authority upwards should local issues prove impossible to deal with at that level. One might inquire how local is local, and who might be *entitled* to receive this form of accounting? A public

rendering may be of little or no interest to some who 'hear' it, yet there may be others who 'require' to hear it because the issues relate to their lives and particular circumstances. In his discussion of the term *entitlement*, Wagner concentrates on those who have such an interest in what the agent is doing and the degree to which they may expect an account to be given by the agent to them. Such persons entitled to an account may be termed 'stakeholders' (Abrahamson, 1977) ie as Wagner notes those whose "concern relates significantly to their lives" (*op cit.*, p.59). Sockett (*op cit.*, p.11) alerts the reader to a 'distinction of significance' ie the agent may be accountable for '*outcomes and results*' whereas in another situation the agent is accountable to a 'code of practice'. Such '*codes of practice*' are essentially codes of *professional* principles which underpin the professionalism claimed by groups determined to be accorded the status and responsibilities of being regarded as a profession. For one aspect of the term the agent is responsible to the 'mandator' while for the other there is a peer group or professional accountability. This touches upon our discussion of professionalism above, and Sockett's proposals for a code of professional practice for teachers are pursued in the conclusion to this chapter. It also raises the question of whether school boards represent mandators (ultimately the people) at a local level and whether accountability should be central to school board functioning.

The above discussion would indicate that teachers and schools are accountable against a number of interpretations of the term. They are provided with resources, teachers have a particular status claiming professionalism and students, their parents and employers of teachers have certain expectations of those charged with particular duties and functions in the education of young persons. The Taylor Report (1977,

6.14) summed this up:

A school is not an end in itself; it is an institution set up and financed by society to achieve certain objectives which society regards as desirable...

In discussing the form of accountability for schools or teachers Sockett (1980, p.12) identifies a number of key questions:-

1. Is it the school or the teacher who is accountable?
2. To whom is the school or teacher accountable?
3. For what is the school or teacher accountable?

Sockett answers each of these questions in turn. School or teacher depends on respective responsibilities and related actions either individual or collective. Teachers might well be responsible for their individual approach in the classroom for example, but cannot be held accountable for the overall administration of the school where it may be a collective group accountability which is necessary. He itemises the *prima facie* individuals and groups who might expect to be in receipt of teacher accountability (*op cit.*, p.14) but recognises this is necessarily problematic and may not concur with teacher perceptions of those to whom they are accountable. This is illustrated by the work on "Teachers' perspectives on school accountability" (Elliott, Bridges, Ebbutt, Gibson and Nias, 1981, pp.1-24). Sockett recognises that the various groupings who might reasonably expect teachers to be accountable may require or seek different information. He notes (*op cit.*, p.15) however,

... at the outset that a person can only be morally responsible (and thus accountable) for what is within his control.

This leads him again to express the view that schools might usefully engage in the declaration of

objectives precisely in terms of what the children are to learn and each teacher to be made accountable for producing the results. (*ibid.*)

Methods of accountability appear to have overtaken the debate concerning the form of accountability. Contested territory has resulted in a range of approaches to school evaluation, school development and teacher appraisal all designed to demonstrate that schools and teachers are 'answerable' in some way for the resources they consume and for the 'product' emerging from the schooling process. As Becher and Maclure (1978, p.13) noted there was a series of anxieties and uncertainties about standards of achievement, curriculum content, lines of managerial responsibility and participation by parents. The ensuing 'debate' did not lessen in the first decade of Mrs Thatcher's Conservative government and 'reforms' relating to such anxieties continue today with the introduction of 'testing', 'opting out', and 'open enrolment' in England and Wales (Haviland, 1988; Simon, 1988). Teacher appraisal has also been introduced, mercifully uncoupled from the initial rhetoric of Sir Keith Joseph which Hewton (1988) suggests led to appraisal appearing to be a "rather vindictive tool" when first mooted. Appraisal allows a clear understanding by teachers of their responsibilities and principal accountabilities, appreciation of levels of performance required and targets for development (Trethowan, 1987, pp. 2-3). The Scottish approach to appraisal identified in the "*National Guidelines for Staff Development and Appraisal in Schools*" clearly links appraisal with a professional

development approach (SOED, 1991) and the revisions being planned in 1997 even more so. It is a managerial tool claiming to enhance effectiveness and increase motivation and communication, but primarily within schools, not external to them and by fellow professionals. The degree to which it will increase teacher accountability to persons or agencies outwith the school is debatable, as is the need to involve any external body such as a school board in the appraisal process, it is perhaps properly dealt with within the internal management of schools. The process may, however, make teachers more aware of their responsibilities.

The pressure for methods of evaluation and appraisal has largely been external to the teaching profession and this allows a questioning of the extent of professionalism given that one of the most important tenets is self-regulation. Coinciding with these approaches to evaluation there has been a discernible trend in increasingly centralised control or significant influence on the curriculum with attempts to create common policy and even conformity underpinned by claims of extension of 'good practice'. The early 1990s drive in the field of evaluation by schools and teachers towards school development planning and school audits (Brown, 1994; Hopkins, 1989; Hargreaves, 1989, 1991) utilised a range of evaluative techniques which promote policies of self-evaluation and localised decision-making which is in tune with decentralisation theories and the promotion of DMR or LFM policies (discussed in Chapter 11). Such self-management approaches (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1992) at one level are designed to increase the autonomy of schools but they are juxtaposed with an increasingly centralised and set curriculum. In accountability terms what the school and teachers may be responsible for and to whom is an

increasingly important consideration as are the potential mechanisms and forums where an account may be made eg. school governing bodies or their equivalent.

4.5 Accountability: a bridge between bureaucracy and professionalism?

Accountability in its senses of rendering an account and monitoring and checking processes may provide a bridge between bureaucracy and professionalism. In the context of 'democracy', both representative and participative, at a local level the school board may have an especially valid claim to be part of that bridge.

I have argued that teachers are bureaucrats or perhaps better described by a more preferable and less pejorative term - 'public servants'. Teachers also claim to be professionals. This is a dilemma because as we have noted some of the characteristics of professionals are that they claim autonomy, allegiance to the professional body, have specific individual expertise, altruistically serve clients etc. How can this equate with being a public servant who is responsible and answerable to higher authority (either a 'manager' or a mandating group) or is responsible to a client group? For teachers this can be particularly problematic and often ambiguous as Bush (1995, pp. 111-127) discusses in relation to models of educational management.

It is recognised that professionals are accountable for their actions - I have argued above that this rests on several concepts. Answerability to oneself and to clients - a form of moral and professional responsibility for one's actions if claiming autonomy, expertise and altruistic service for certain others. Answerability in the sense of assuming responsibility for

maintaining one's expertise and extending it is surely a hallmark of professionalism? Contractual accountability in the sense of being answerable to an employer, often a 'bureaucracy' serving political masters, which may utilise the 'expertise' of professionals. Without giving an account to and being responsible for professional actions in relation to the bureaucracy, the bureaucracy surely holds the right to dispense with that particular professional? The bureaucracy provides a means and vehicle for professional action despite the perceived strictures and stratification evident in many administrative bureaucracies which might lead one to conclude that professionals exercising independent thought and action would somehow be handicapped by their position in a bureaucracy. As Shipman (1984, p.117) notes,

... in practice professionals flourish in bureaucracies.
Furthermore, the established procedures are a defence manned by bureaucrat and professional alike against favouritism, nepotism and patronage.

Shipman also argues that an administrative bureaucracy is essential if large-scale public education is to be possible. The scale and diverse nature of provision matched with a desire to provide consistent service while catering for local and even individual needs requires a rational decision-making bureaucracy which does not promote a strict rule-book mentality.

While one might describe schools and education services as bureaucracies, citing as evidence the hierarchical nature of management structures in schools for example, they permit and encourage the provision of an effective service. I have indicated above that there are competing claims between bureaucracy and individualism as expressed by aspects of

professionalism. The existence of a form of 'dual professionalism' is thus discernible particularly in the case of teachers. Hoyle (1986, pp.84-85) suggested that teachers exercise a degree of autonomy and independence of judgement when dealing with classroom practice.

The context for the exercise of teachers' professionalism is the classroom where by virtue of their knowledge, skill and associated status, they are technically in authority over their pupils.

A corollary of this may be as Wagner (*op cit.*, p.131) remarks

Teachers ... should be accountable for the responsibilities one would normally associate with their position, and also for the actions they take or fail to take in the process of meeting them.

The teaching professional is responsible both to the legal 'client' (parent) and to the authorising agency (education authority) via the bureaucracy. In the case of British teachers, the political structures of the country provide the resources and mandate for mass public education. It may be argued therefore that accountability to the 'mandator' or representatives enhances the role of professionals within the bureaucracy, and in turn 'personalises' the bureaucracy. A real concern for some professionals may be that in a problematic world such an approach may demystify their profession thus reducing the claim for professional status and reward.

An increasing demand for accountability has emerged not only from the political masters but from consumer groups including in the educational world - parents. Harding (1987, p.74) suggests

As consumers, it is vital that parents have an effective means of

becoming involved in the school's policy-making. Parents have a significant stake in the well-being of the school and their wishes should be taken fully into account ... The role of the parent governor is to represent the views of parents ...

This returns us to a central theme of this study namely the need for and role of representatives on local school bodies which possess monitoring or management functions to a degree.

Within teaching itself all teachers can be assumed to have professional and bureaucratic obligations. None more so than with the management role of headteachers and senior professionals as Frith (1988, p.51) acknowledges,

... the teaching functions and the management functions overlap almost totally, so that every teacher has some involvement in management and almost every manager some involvement in teaching. Furthermore a promotion structure has developed in modern times in which proficiency in the professional function of teaching has been the principal means of advancement to positions where managerial functions become more important and occupy an increasing proportion of time.

There are real tensions in schools in a theoretical and practical sense with respect to the role of headteacher and particular approaches to school management. In professional terms teachers may regard headteachers as having much more accountability to an education authority for example. This is a fallacy based on a loose interpretation of legal obligations by teachers to the EA and also an interpretation of the role of head which accepts that headteachers function in ways which ought to provide leadership, sense of purpose and general direction for an institution and its professional and non-professional workforce. The fact that most

headteachers have been appointed on the basis of their professional competence and expertise is overlooked in the struggle to accept a sense of managerially-dominant rather than professionally-based approaches. Such approaches be they managerial or professional are increasingly making demand for accountability on behalf of individual teachers.

Bureaucratic accountability exists in a number of formats. Professionals working within bureaucracies retain their accountability to individuals. In the instance of teachers this is both to professional line managers and individual parents (and their offspring). There is nothing new in this approach. At the level of the school which is by and large regarded as based on locality or community there is a significant argument for the bureaucracy offering an account of its activities. Parents are a particularly crucial set of 'stakeholders' (cf Chapter 3) as a group and as a part of the local community. Given that our society is a democracy, the ways in which such participation or representation may be enacted is open to interpretation of the process of democracy as discussed in Chapter 3.

4.6 Relationship to participation

I provided on p.50 a summary of *indicators of democracy*. From that list, I have selected below those indicators which might apply readily to school boards or governing bodies. They are concerned with citizen involvement in decision-making with respect to schools and school-related education. It is argued that such participation allows views to be freely expressed and acted upon if necessary and allows decisions to be made at an appropriate level of the bureaucracy.

involvement by citizens

competitive elections

extensive suffrage
direct participation or through representatives
opinion seeking devices
opinion making devices
decision-making systems
two-way information flows - feedback systems
systems of 'checks' - accountability
debating of issues
rights of information flow and opportunity to comment by citizens
distinction between long-term planning and more limited detailed
decisions
right to put forward views and make representations.

This chapter has argued that the concepts of bureaucracy and professionalism are not necessarily incompatible but that accountability is applicable to both. Participative management is one of several modes of accountability and the school board/ governing body mode is addressed in Chapter 6. Leading in to that, an initial discussion of the nature of school management more generally and issues pertinent to school boards more specifically is provided in Chapter 5.

School Management

This chapter examines management theories and reviews a range of possible models of management in an educational setting.

Leadership and headship of schools is considered in a developing context of participative management. The relationship between school management, governing bodies and school boards is initially considered and purposes for participative councils in education derived from public government, political statements and pertinent research discussed.

The notion of involvement by boards in a school management partnership is mooted.

The nature of school management

5 Management theories and school management

5.1 Introduction

Both the literature and official government pronouncements have asserted that school boards should be concerned with aspects of school management.

Educational management (Bottery, 1992; Brown, 1990; Bush, 1994, 1995; Cave and Wilkinson, 1991; Chapman, 1990; Humes and MacKenzie, 1994; Torrington and Weightman, 1989) has grown in importance in the last few decades as moves towards greater effectiveness and efficiency have gained momentum in schools (Everard and Morris, 1990; Bush and West-Burnham, 1994). Staff development and inservice training of teachers, especially of promoted staff, often emphasise management, be it of classroom resources or curriculum management or organisational management. In the UK, government reform of the management of schools has been a particular force in the last decade. Despite recent concentration on leadership (Ribbins, Glatter, Simkins, and Watson, 1991), school effectiveness and quality assurance (Goddard and Leask, 1992; West-Burnham and Davies, 1994) and the proposed qualifications for headteachers there has been an emphasis on greater participation by stakeholders; while 'participative management' approaches have been pursued by local authorities and teachers themselves. The arrival of Local Financial Management (Downes, 1988) or Devolved School Management has contributed greatly to the interest in school management, as decentralisation in the sense of limited but local decision-making gathers momentum (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988; 1992).

An extensive literature on educational management draws on the twentieth century industrial and commercial management experience from the USA, Britain and Europe with a view to illuminating aspects of school management.

Hughes, Ribbins, and Thomas (1985) in their Introduction observe that the terms 'management' and 'administration' are used interchangeably in the literature although there is recognition of a differential between the terms and an opportunity for confusion. Citing Glatter (1972) they comment that in the British private sector, 'management' denotes *'higher level work'* while in the public sector 'administration' takes on such a mantle. Peat Marwick and McLintock (1988, p.A2) offer a similar distinction between administration and management:

Management is about developing policy, forward planning priorities and evaluation; administration is about executing policy, systems and control.

If that distinction is accepted, the question arises whether school boards should be more involved in the former or the latter; it will be argued later that theorists lean towards the former, whereas practice has concentrated on the latter. However there may be a further distinguishing concept: that of governance (see p.168 below) which has more to do with management than administration.

Bush (1995) suggests there is little agreement that educational management is the same as the management of other institutions or concerns; he describes educational management as an eclectic discipline. Some commentators such as Handy (1985, 1986) or Everard (1986) have

argued that schools are little different from other organisations and that there are elements which can be addressed by common or similar management approaches but subsequently have come to "acknowledge the cultural differences between schools and other organizations" (Everard and Morris, 1990, p.12). As Bush (1995, p.10) notes schools being staffed by education professionals has implications for management because of the tendency of professionals to prefer to manage themselves. Sharing management with fellow professionals or accepting management from a leading professional within an institution may prove problematic, however when lay person involvement is proposed as with school boards that may offer even more issues for school managers.

Much of the developing literature emphasises 'practice' at the expense of consideration of the underpinning theories of management and suggests that some view management as 'atheoretical' but there are significant attempts to begin to relate theory to practice in order to enhance practical aspects of management; this is attempted by Hughes *et al* (*op cit.*, p.xiii) through their

emphasis ... on seeking understanding through critical analysis rather than detailed description or general prescription, there is an explicit assumption that achieving such understanding is at least a first step towards becoming a better educational manager.

5.2 Theories of educational management

Ribbins (1985, p.223) suggests that

Students of educational management who turn to organisational theory for guidance in their attempt to understand and manage educational institutions will not find a

single, universally-applicable theory but a multiplicity of theoretical approaches each jealously guarded by its particular epistemic community.

Bush (1995) offers an overview of the principal theories within broad categories or **models** of educational management and argues for the relevance of theory to good practice despite the practitioner's tendency to be dismissive about theory (*op cit*, p.17). He recognises that the seismic changes of the market place effected by the 1988 Education Reform Act have radically altered the "climate of educational management in the 1990s" (pp.12-13).

Bush analyses the pertinent literature on theories of school management and uses the term 'model' rather than theory deliberately, arguing that the acceptance and application of management theory to practical decision-making is problematic. The cultural model has been added since his 1986 edition while the then democratic model has been renamed collegial. Bush analyses each of these models in turn focusing on four main elements (pp.25-26) to distinguish between the perspectives; these are the *goals* of an institution; organisational *structures* pertaining; the context or *environment* in which an institution functions; and how appropriate is the *leadership* style and strategies adopted. While recognising that as Greenfield (1989, p.93) notes

Most theories of organization grossly simplify the nature of the reality with which they deal.

Bush recognises the limitations of all the models, the bulk of which are alternatives to **formal** approaches; the limitations of five of the six models proffered by Bush (p.24) are summarised overleaf, the exception being

Models of management derived from Bush (1995)

MODEL	ELEMENTS			
	Goals	Structures	Environment	Leadership
formal	not all personnel will share organisational goals	permanent with personnel accorded positions within this structure	'open systems' encourage many external links in contrast to 'closed systems' which view relationships in strict accountability terms only	often one-dimensional; belonging to the post of headteacher both internally and by related external bodies such as EAs or central government
political	concentration on interest group aims	no agreement about organisation	potential battlefields and unstable with vying interests groups	Head often a mediator in such a setting
subjective	individual purposes, interpretation and meanings dominate	not fixed; interaction between individuals	little attention paid to external relationships	product of personal qualities and skills
ambiguity	goals are regarded as vague and uncertain	structure is problematic; concept of loose-coupling	sensitivity required to relate to unpredictable and volatile external environment	leaders need to come to terms with ambiguity which may not permit clear objectives
cultural	goals serve to reinforce values and beliefs of an organisation	individual roles are established and there is a pattern of relationships between role-holders	a source of values and beliefs related to notions of marketing and providing two-way transmission of values	leader responsible for development and maintenance of culture

The above may be compared with Bush (1995, p.147) where the major features of the six models are identified and summarised.

the collegial or democratic model as I should like to discuss Bush's analysis of this particular model in the light of this study, but with some initial and brief consideration of the other five models.

Several versions of the **formal** model exist including structural (Becher and Kogan, 1992), bureaucratic (Noble and Pym, 1989, pp.28-30), systems (Landers and Myers, 1980, pp.130-133), rational and hierarchical approaches. Bush argues that formal models are characterised by: systems and structures ; goals and objectives usually articulated by the leader, eg headteachers; rational decision-making ; an emphasis on accountability to external sponsors eg EA, and authority invested in leaders as per their official position in an organisation.

The central features of **political** models are concerned with bargaining processes and arenas where *conflict, power and influence* come to bear eg the interaction between groups or departments in secondary schools where Principal Teachers may compete with each other for resources or particular policies in a self-interested fashion. The description of a series of competing sub-groups is inadequate for primary schools where there may be less opportunity for fragmentation of institutional goals. A school board may also be a potential arena where various categories of membership may vie for power or influence over decision-making and policy development. Consideration of concepts such as compliance and exchange (p.83) reflects some of the discussion on democracy in Chapter 3 of this study. The model does offer a descriptive framework for interpretation of behaviour and approaches to school management, and possibly school governance.

Owing much to the work of T.B.Greenfield, the significant feature of the **subjective** model is the focus on individuals and their beliefs and values within organisations. This model argues the need to consider the meaning placed on events by the individual members of an organisation, because individuals bring their own experiences, background and prejudices to bear on any event and different beliefs about events are possible. The most notable example in a school would be teachers indicating they did not recognise their headteacher's description of policies or process because the teachers have interpreted events differently from the Head, of course governing bodies can equally "derive divergent meanings from the same event" (p.95).

Uncertainty and unpredictability are the hallmarks of **ambiguity** models eg teachers may not fully understand how children learn or other processes are not understood by all but some groupings may have a shared viewpoint thus ensuring fragmentation. Bush argues that ambiguity models are also partial theories which illuminate certain aspects of school management. He suggests they exaggerate the extent of unpredictability in schools and cites the professional socialisation processes which militate against such ambiguity. School development planning and the requirement of governors to have action plans after school inspection in England and Wales are cited as examples of rational approaches which might counteract turbulent or anarchic contexts.

Bush argues that **cultural** models have become more significant since 1986 hence a new chapter about the model which emphasises the informal, focusing on the sharing of beliefs and values which differentiates this from the subjective model. The model may be used to obtain "a more

balanced portrait of educational institutions" (p.130). Shared norms and meanings are developed but there remains the danger of sub-cultures developing too. School culture is expressed through use of language and expression, through behaviours and events such as assemblies and visually eg through dress codes. The model offers scope for leaders determining the culture or imposing their own values on weaker members; that may be too mechanistic and the ethics of such a situation immediately causes concern. The school board as an additional element in school culture offers challenges to professionals particularly Heads. Will the board adopt, assimilate, reject, adapt or contribute to the pre-existing values of the school as an organisation and how will that manifest itself in school policy and management?

With respect to **collegial or democratic models**, Bush (p.53) argues that such models are excessively *normative* in their insistence that "management ought to be based on agreement". Such democratic values while generally accepted in western societies often do not reflect reality as was noted in Chapter 3 of this study. Within organisations staffed by professionals, democratic approaches do reflect the autonomy of the professional and the extension to involvement in general organisational planning and management. There is a sharing of common values from the professional perspective. Again democratic models presume forms of representation, in a committee structure for example, and are based on a need to seek compromise or consensus. Such collegial models, while common in higher education, are not pre-eminent in schools. Certainly there is evidence that teachers want to participate more in decision-making and there is currently much over-use of the term 'ownership' of policies and decisions perhaps reflecting aspects of the **cultural** model.

Bush cites examples of collegial secondary and primary schools which have been researched. Despite complex participative systems, the Head is still able to exercise control beyond the ideal notion of facilitating and influencing policy and decision-making.

Agreement of *goals* is an indicator of democratic organisations but this remains problematic in a school organisation as the horizontal *structures* found in democratic models are at odds with hierarchical structures and line-management systems of a more **formal** type. Accountability takes on ambiguous attributes in a democratic model because heads will still be regarded by EAs for example as having responsibility for policy formulation and achievement; this may be regarded as a potential area for conflict. Bush (pp.61-66) offers comment on the limitations of *collegial* models. They are idealistic and their prescription obscures the reality of what actually happens. Categorised by slow and cumbersome decision-making, there is no guarantee of commitment to the democratic process in terms of time and expertise. Competence is not guaranteed by election or volunteering, and consensus is often denied by sectional interest, but interestingly Bush suggests that a collegial participatory framework may "become the focal point for disagreement between factions" (pp.67-68) - this is a point I return to when I consider school boards and governing bodies. Leadership and accountability factors within schools may not reflect democratic aspirations and those participating may feel that it is all rhetoric and no substance. While democratic models do emphasise the expertise of professional staff "this rarely trumps the positional authority of official leaders" (p.68). School boards and governing bodies could be part of a collegial approach to school management. The board's own processes and activities could be determined in a collegial way although

there would be questions about knowledge and expertise to be asked in relation to the potential for informed participation. As a part of the wider process of attempting to reach consensus at school level, the board might share in the decision-making process; this might militate against the external accountability function, an important feature of democracy.

- **A question of leadership**

A major emphasis in Bush's analysis of management theories has been the impact of any theory or stance on the **leadership** within an educational institution. The burgeoning literature on leadership, school improvement and effectiveness makes much of the role of the school leader, particularly the headteacher (Mortimore, Sammons, Ecob, and Stoll, (1988); Ribbins, Glatter, Simkins, and Watson, (1991); Guthrie (1991); Cave and Wilkinson (1991); Goddard and Leask (1992)). Leadership is usually provided by the headteacher or senior management team (SMT). Goodwin (1968, p. 32) quoted in Jones (1987, p.43,) suggested

... a thoroughly good school is one where pupils apply themselves to their work and play with a steady and successful zeal. If this does not obtain, the Head must call the quality of his own leadership into the strictest question. The fault will almost certainly be there, not with the staff and less still with the pupils. Staff and pupils are what the Head makes of them. No good general has slack soldiers - that is what leadership is all about.

These remarks reflect a bygone age, today, the task of leadership is shared with a range of people, particularly in secondary schools and increasingly so in the primary sector. Goodwin describes that era of the 'monarchic Head', a label proffered by Jones in her tracing of the role of

Head and the history of headship and the organisational cultures which such Head 'types' may be associated with (Jones, 1987 p.126). The 'monarch' was replaced by the 'bureaucratic' phase of Headship which attempted to make the Head some kind of Chief Executive and to add "a business-like veneer... to their charismatic and traditional characteristics". This phase has been followed by attempts to 'democratise' schools and their management, but while the Head's apparent authority may diminish as procedures become more democratic and participation becomes widespread at all levels, his or her personal influence could well be greater. Bottery (1990, pp.130-131) suggests a continuum of three possible conceptions of headship in schools ; these are "(a) the historical paternalist to (b) the modern manager through to (c) the administrative democrat". Bottery asserts that tradition and inertia have resulted in the realisation of (b) but no real discernible moves towards (c), with implications for relations between headteachers and school boards.

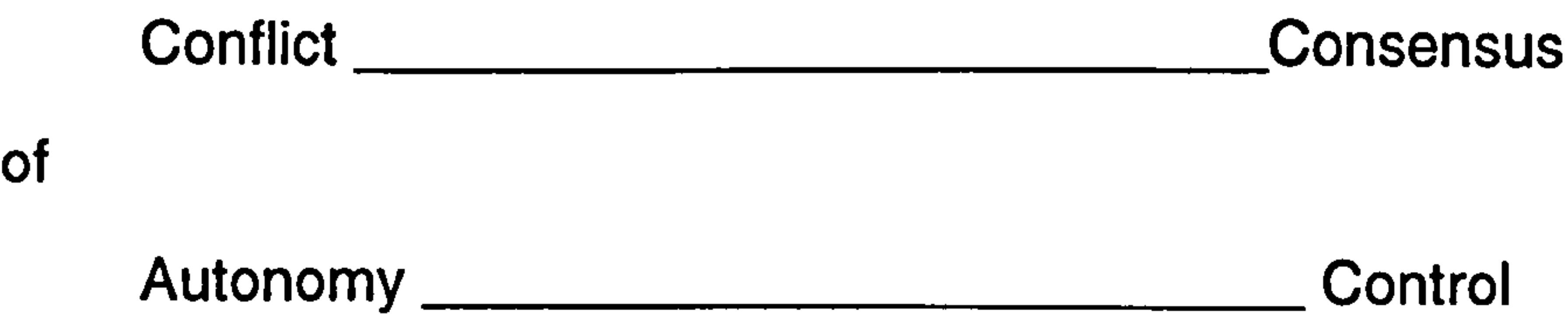
With participative management approaches there may be a greater need for leadership or appropriate forms of leadership. HMI in England & Wales published *Ten Good Schools* in 1977; their view is expressed below:

Emphasis is laid on consultation, team work and participation, but without exception the most important single factor in the success of these schools is the quality of leadership at the head... Conscious of the corruption of power, and though ready to take final responsibility, they have made power-sharing the keynote of their organisation and administration. Such leadership is crucial for success and these schools are what their heads and staff have made them.

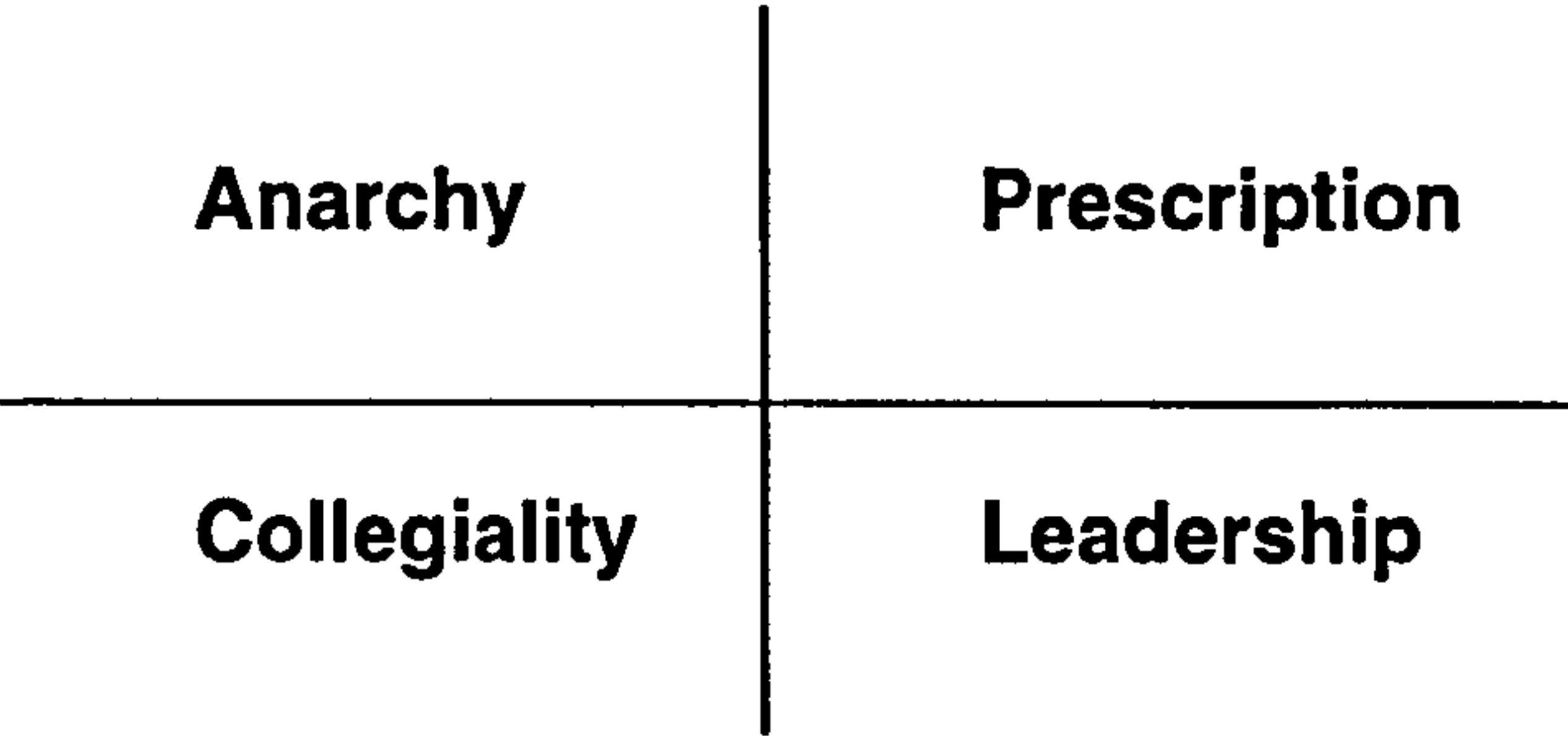
Strathclyde Regional Council in *Managing Progress* (1986) endorsed

participation and consultation but insist that while the Head should "consult widely, the power of decision remains with the head teacher" and that the concept of participation in management, therefore, does not embrace collegial or democratic management with consensus and corporate decision-making but rests instead with decision-making by an individual having taken into account the views of others obtained through the process of consultation. At all levels of management, failure to clarify such distinctions can result only in frustration and discontent.

The emergence of school boards offers leaders opportunity and challenge. School leaders, particularly in Scotland, despite exhortations about increased participative styles may have not found it easy genuinely to involve staff. The tension between consultation and participation is an issue. The situation where the Head is accountable and open to suggestions, influence and the decisions of a school board (while still being responsible for managing the organisation) offers no limit to role ambiguity and is a genuine test of leadership and style of leadership. Leadership style can promote a sense of purpose or mission within individual establishments and Torrington and Weightman (1989, pp.224-230) describe the tensions associated with leadership and inherent in managing schools. They itemise the tensions of



and offer 4 major ways of possibly dealing with such tensions with respect to teachers:



They suggest that only 3 of these main styles may be appropriate but make no claims for the pre-eminence of any particular style eg. Prescription is appropriate where consistency is important. Leadership is helpful when there is uncertainty that can and should be dealt with quickly. Collegiality is useful when the full commitment of individuals is necessary. (p.229) Is this equally true of the dealings between headteachers and school boards?

5.3 School management, governing bodies and school boards

It has long been part of tradition in the United Kingdom to appoint or elect people to serve on bodies concerned with governance. This involvement of interested persons or 'stakeholders' has been extended to schools in Britain progressively and especially so in the past two decades.

To be a school governor is to fulfil a public duty or service and is part of the tradition of British public administration.
Harding (1987, p.3)

Baron (1981) details the history of the development of school councils across a range of countries and systems. Unquestionably, the position of parents with respect to participating in the management of schools has been enhanced and developed over the past few decades, but while such public spirited personnel have been introduced into the 'management

arrangements' for schools (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991) there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding their role, purpose and function. (Kogan *et al.*, 1984; Macbeth, 1990) The membership and role of such bodies varies from country to country (Macbeth, 1984; Beattie, 1985) reflecting priorities in individual systems and the principles to which they adhere. The general arguments for citizen participation have been discussed in Chapter 3, and as suggested, they may usefully be extended to schools. Citizen participation in the administration and management of schools, as noted, may ensure an element of accountability of public servants (cf Chapter 4). This trend towards increased participation at school level has become the 'norm' in the western democracies. Skeffington (1969, p.11) noted with respect to 'planning' over twenty years ago that

It may be that the evolution of the structures of representative government which has concerned western nations for the last century and a half is now entering a new phase. There is a growing demand by many groups for more opportunity to contribute and for more say in the working out of policies which affect people not merely at election time, but continuously as proposals are being hammered out and, certainly as they are being implemented. Life, so the argument runs, is becoming more and more complex, and one cannot leave all the problems to one's representatives.

The moves towards extending such participation and active involvement in the management of schools were attractive too "because it appeared to be relatively cheap and capable of rapid implementation." (Beattie, 1985, p.228). Increasing participation also looked good politically. Such developments have not been without attendant difficulties and criticisms; as noted above there is sometimes little consensus or agreed understanding among the various representative participants about roles,

purposes and therefore functions and actions to be pursued. (Kogan *et al.*, 1984) Brooksbank and Anderson (1987, pp.121-122) note "That newly appointed governors feel somewhat uncertain as to their role and responsibilities."

Scottish school boards and governing bodies in England and Wales have a 'role' (albeit different roles) in school management. How applicable are any of the above models of management and/or leadership delineated by Bush and others, to the role and functions of school boards? Are boards 'arenas' for conflict? How 'democratic' or collegial are they? Who dominates their structures? What is the role of the individual member? How accountable to other elements in their environment are boards? What is the relationship between the professionals particularly the headteacher and the boards? What ought this relationship be? How collegial should boards be? Who can offer leadership on school boards and who might be appropriately prescriptive? Such issues will be returned to subsequently.

5.4 Purposes of governing bodies and school boards

With the formation of school boards in Scotland, after initial elections in October 1989, came a plethora of advice and information from official bodies, including the government through the Scottish Office, and the local authorities who appeared anxious about their developing role in relation to school boards. There were different views regarding their introduction:

They were seen by the Government as a way of allowing parents more say in the running of schools and as a way of affording schools a parental perspective on their work.
(MacBeath *et al.*, 1992, p. i)

Some consideration of public statements in the period leading up to school

boards endorses this viewpoint. On August 12th 1987, when introducing the initial proposals for school boards (*School Management and the Role of Parents : Consultation Paper* (August 1987)), the then Minister of State for Education, Michael Forsyth, speaking about schools in general said:

We aim to place parents in a key position, where they can work in real partnership with headteachers and school staff.

The concept of 'partnership' appears and in the legislation (School Boards Act (1988)) there are indicators of possible partnership and collaboration, but as Gallagher (1995) notes, there are varying interpretations of this concept and management is only one of them. This "key position" was elaborated upon by the government in the *Consultation Paper*. Several quotations from that paper may illustrate the intended purposes of school boards at that time :

...the professional decisions of the headteacher and his colleagues should be open to the scrutiny and responsive to the reasonable demands of parents and the local community.
(para.2)

...to provide a framework which will give parents an established forum for expression of their interests. (para.3)

This relates to aspects of accountability at a local level although as ever the local community is difficult to define. Accountability is followed by references to the possibility of influencing policy and management through a right to information and the right to question policies of headteachers and of education authorities, thus making some form of participation in policy making and management a strong possibility.

...that parents ought to have a general right of access to information about the educational provision and the management of resources in their children's schools, so that they can be informed about and question the policies of education authorities and headteachers. (para.6)

A Scottish Office booklet (*School Management: The Government's Conclusions*) of January 1988 stated:

The Boards will provide a forum for parents, the community and school staff to discuss together how they want their school to be run.

The Information Pack issued by the Scottish Office in 1989 as part of the campaign of raising public awareness of and interest in school boards advised:

The purpose of School Boards is to establish much closer links between schools and parents and to give parents a greater say in the running of schools.

Ian Lang, while Minister of State for Education, in the Foreword to the *School Board Manual* (Scottish Office, 1989) wrote:

School Boards have been established in Scotland in order to involve parents and the community more fully in the running of schools.

Again Mr Lang, writing in the TSES in October 1989, further stated:

Through school boards, parents and the local community will have a new, and precisely defined, role to play in the running of schools. That role must of course be exercised in partnership with education authorities and teachers. The whole thrust of our policy on school boards, as set out in the School Boards (Scotland Act) 1988, and the guidance and training materials

that we have since produced, is to emphasise the integration of the new strands of parent and community involvement with the functions of the education authority in providing school education and of teachers delivering it. This builds on a recognition of the long-standing twin duties of parents to educate their children, and of education authorities to provide schools through which that education may take place.

The Research and Intelligence Unit, in January 1990, provided a specification seeking tenders from researchers wishing to undertake the proposed SED funded research on the *Evaluation of the work of school boards*. Interestingly, this specification outlines two "primary objectives of School Boards":

to provide an effective input of parental views on the provision of school education at the level of the individual school; and to provide an effective mechanism for progressive delegation of executive functions from education authority level to school level.

At this moment suffice to note that there is little evidence to suggest that board members have regarded themselves as managers .

While Board members could see themselves having a role in policy development very few wanted any part in detailed management... the 'fear' of a management role could be put down to a lack of understanding of what that might imply or what their role in it might be.
(MacBeath *et al*, 1992, p.32)

Of course this assumes certain ideas relating to management and administration. It may be argued that influence on policy making or formulation is the key 'management' task of boards, while the

professionals should be left to 'manage' the day-to-day details with accountability to the board.

Education authorities, like the government, had an agenda concerned with school boards. The *Welcome Aboard : An Introductory Guide for School Boards* booklet published by Strathclyde Regional Council suggested that "No two boards will be the same, and no doubt some boards will have quite different ideas" (undated, p.3). The concept of "partnership" emerged again in the Strathclyde booklet and is given heavy emphasis; there it was envisaged as a tripartite partnership of participation in the effective delivery of that Region's vision of education in the context of the Regional Social Strategy designed "to give special help to those who are disadvantaged". (*ibid.*, p.13)

Strathclyde Region and its schools are already partners. Now school boards are being added to the partnership.
(*ibid.*, p.11)

There are myriad possibilities and Macbeth (1990, p.22) offers a list of possible purposes:

Control, influence, accountability, support? A link, a forum, a focus, a channel, a balance, a bridge, a vehicle? To give parents as consumers a greater say in the running of the school, to share in making decisions, to ensure that each school develops its own identity, to encourage links with the community, to protect the interests of the school?

He later (p.32), summarises the possible 'official' purposes and suggests that the intention was to allow parental influence on school management with a potential for taking on certain managing aspects as boards gained

in confidence, controlling their own pace and development; any schooling issue was able to be discussed by boards and they had rights to make representations, while school management would be accountable to the boards. He then offers the opinion that there may be three overarching purposes for school boards. Efficient management of the school; an extension of local democracy; and the educational welfare of children and young persons. Specific arguments in favour of citizen participation, with an emphasis on parent participation, in school affairs and management have been discussed in Chapter 3, where it was suggested participation might have a variety of purposes particularly in relation to school boards. Other pointers in the literature on this theme, especially relating to the system in England and Wales, are discussed in Chapter 6 reflecting on the development of governing bodies south of the border.

Kogan *et al.* (1984, p.7) offer 8 main purposes or "approaches" adopted by governing bodies in England and Wales. These purposes include:

- provision responsive to local community needs;
- partnership in the control of schools and education policy - a purpose which increases representation from new 'constituencies', particularly parents;
- public accountability and measuring efficiency of schools;
- recognising and promoting the unique character of each institution.

Kogan's final purpose is also advocated by Harding (1987, p.69):

One of the main reasons for having school governors is to ensure that each school develops its own identity and is not viewed simply as a satellite of the LEA.... influencing its character and overall aims and objectives.

Other purposes have been advanced including control of the school as outlined by the Taylor Report for England and Wales (1977):

...the governing body should stand in the direct line of formal responsibility between the local education authority and the head of the school. (3.15, p.16)

The composition of this ' governing body ' was defined as representing various interests (4.6, p.24) with the emphasis that " all the parties should share in making decisions on the organisation and running of the school..." (3.9, p.14).

Contrastingly, in the Scottish study of school councils, (Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge, 1980, pp.23-24), there is a suggestion of a move towards the reduction and possible removal of executive powers resulting in an enhanced power or influence. The arguments in favour of a "Principal-in-council for each school" outlined in Chapter 8 of the Report suggest a model in which the council would retain the right "to discuss and advise on any matter related to the school" (*ibid.*, p.103) while providing for "accountability to the school council of all with obligations relating to the schooling of the child" (*ibid.*, p.103). Such an approach has attributes similar to those of the Astin Report for Northern Ireland which suggests the governing body should be

a vehicle for bringing influence to bear without being empowered to override the professional judgment of the Principal and the teachers; (1979, 7.3).

Macbeth (1990) develops the discussion of purposes for school boards, building on earlier work, and he suggests (p.23) that purposes can be multifarious and that boards are free to select their own purposes and determine their own development and destiny. This potentially telling aspect of the school boards legislation is enabling in the sense that a board by and large may determine what its own aims and objectives may be. If boards can determine any number of their own purposes in excess of those laid down in the 1988 Act, the related functions potentially unlimited unless the Act expressly forbids control over a particular area eg. staffing and the curriculum (Section 15(2) of the Act). There is nothing in the legislation to stop boards discussing such areas despite the perceptions of some headteachers that they should not. Diversity of purpose is contained in the Glasgow University report (*op. cit.*, pp.23-24) with the discussion of types of participatory action viz

deciding, ensuring, advising, communicating.

This has been discussed in Chapter 3 of this work and there are important issues in this form of management responsibility for board members.

The legislation confirmed many of the statements made prior to enactment. The School Boards (Scotland) Act, 1988 does not outline overtly any purposes or aims but some may be identified eg. the voting majority of parents (Section 2) providing an increased influence for parents; or the promotion of contact between school, parents and community and the particular fostering of Parent Associations/Parent Teacher Associations (Section 12); and a form of accountability by the

board to parents by reporting at least annually on the board's activities (Section 12); and involvement in, but not control of a direct management function namely the selection of senior school staff (Section 11 and Schedule 2).

5.5 Towards an educational management partnership?

There are difficulties in determining what is meant by partnership but a useful definition is afforded by Pugh (1989, p.5).

...a working relationship that is characterized by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

There is scope for school boards in management terms to evolve a *management* partnership model involving parents, community interests, professionals and education authorities. A management partnership does not overtly appear in the various official statements quoted above. There are references to forums for discussion; of how the school should be run; giving parents a greater say in the running of schools etc. I believe that a partnership in the management of schools mirroring the desirable educational partnership between parent and teacher in relation to the individual child is a logical development. This might allay the fears of professionals regarding 'interference' and the concerns of parents and others about lack of influence on something which they have individual legal responsibility for ie the education of individual children. Those with an interest in the school will be represented and will influence its development in the decision making process. There is a need for real communication and goodwill among the 'partners' as Beattie concludes:

The more openness there is about such decisions, and the more information about the constraints upon them, then the less fear, suspicion, defectiveness and misunderstanding there will be -- and the more likelihood of all parties eventually being able to participate in processes of advising, ensuring and deciding.
(1985, p.248)

A move towards management partnership based on equality, respect and openness provides an opportunity for school boards to be major influences on the education of all children. This discussion has ranged across concepts of local participation, democracy, bureaucracy, accountability, professionalism and management with particular reference to schools. There can be a significant role for school boards in school management and this is now being recognised.

- **School boards and school management**

What might be the role of boards in relation to school management?

Parents and coopted members (who are not professional teachers) of school boards potentially have a significant role; this is not intended to allow boards to 'take over' the management of schools, indeed the 1988 legislation expressly forbids this, but the purpose may be expressed as a contribution of opinions expressing disagreement if necessary, observations, important perspectives, affirmation and support, and informed decision making in selected areas. This would encompass what this writer means by management partnership. Boards through Section 9 of the School Boards Act (1988) have some control or veto of '*per capita*' school spending. They ought to be presented with information and advice - certainly the Management Training for Headteachers initiative (MTHT: Module 0) includes activities on how to give boards comprehensive yet understandable information - permitting them to make decisions regarding

the various options or recommendations afforded them in relation to the responsibilities they have in this financial area despite its apparent meagreness (about 5%) compared to the total school budget, including staffing and other resources (School Boards Act, 1988, sub-sections 17 (4), (5) and (6)). Boards are entitled to receive substantial general and school specific information (including information from other schools on request) from the local authority, and to seek delegation orders.

Not surprisingly, the headteacher who is described as "the principal professional adviser" to the board, in the *School Board Manual* (SOED, 1989, 2.5), has been accorded 'chief executive' status with a responsibility to local authorities as employer and an accountability function to school boards. This should not just be about approval to spend money, but the relationship between headteacher and board and headteacher and local authority becomes even more important with the developing approaches to local financial management of schools in England & Wales, or 'devolved school management' in Scotland.

The Scottish Inspectorate have issued some booklets on management structures, roles and approaches (HMI, 1984) and on effectiveness (HMI, 1988; 1989), while in 1992 an Audit Unit headed by the Scottish Inspectorate was established with the specific remit of commenting on standards and quality. Aspect reports on school management and related issues presumably reflect good practice as witnessed in inspections combined with a distillation of theoretical insights (rarely acknowledged) gained from the literature and discussion with interested parties. Despite moves to include 'ordinary people' on school inspection teams the official HMI reports to date on school management reveal a professional enclave

dominated by teachers and administrators. Participation is endorsed in relation to teaching staff:

Participation by staff in the decision-making process not only brings out a wider range of ideas it lets staff demonstrate their abilities and gains their commitment to school policies.
(1984, 3.2.2)

Surely the same might be said of parental participation, particularly with respect to parent members of school boards? The discussion of accountability HMI (1984, 2.7) also makes no reference to parents. Little concern for the interests of parents is evinced in their discussions of the management of schools. The experience of parental involvement in governance and management of schools in England and Wales has been ignored or disregarded and this reflects a rather insular and inward looking critique of existing management structures where parents are unlikely to be involved as such a model fails to mirror the prevailing consensus in Scottish education. There are recognitions of the accountability function of schools to "the public for the education provided" (HMI, 1988, p.1) and confirmed by Beveridge in his interview (Chapter 11), but this is expressed in terms of increased information to parents either from individual schools or through the publication of HMI reports on individual schools. In terms of the primary school there is also an emphasis on partnership by "establishing supportive working relationships with parents" (HMI, 1989, p.9) There are, however, suggestions that

...the introduction of school boards will provide a further opportunity for parents to have a greater involvement in the education of their children. (*ibid.*, p.12)

but no views are expressed on the role of such boards in the

management of the effective school. The management role of headteachers appears paramount,

Management training for headteachers will receive a major stimulus as a result of the Scottish Education Department's initiative... covering the key aspects of the management of schools. (*ibid.*, p.24)

One of the developing "key aspects" of school management since 1989 has been the school board's role in the management of schools, and the increasing importance being placed on parental involvement by the government and subsequently HMI. There is some confusion about the potential role of parents. Parents may variously be perceived as partners, as custodians, as clients or customers, and as consumers; this is true up to a point in Scotland although on school boards there is not much executive power in the first instance for parents. Macbeth (1990, pp.131-134) summarises his arguments regarding the school as a unit of management and the importance of influence rather than power and the possible strictures of limited executive functions. It is argued that influence is more important than particular narrow executive functions - greater influence results in schools being substantially less autonomous and being involved with those who have a legitimate interest in its welfare and development. It may lead to situations where a partnership in management emerges which promotes collaboration on behalf of the school by the parties to the partnership as a result of consensus and consent by recognising and capitalising on the differing roles of the elements within the partnership; this is my preferred development.

The government's conclusions about the consultative exercise on boards (cf. Chapter 9) was entitled *School Management* and other statements

speak of "giving parents a greater say in the running of schools". The progressive delegation of powers to boards from local authorities has not materialised, not because local authorities have been intransigent, but because boards have been reluctant to take on additional duties (MacBeath *et al.*, 1992). Opting out has been singularly unsuccessful in Scotland (and since the election of Labour in 1997 has become impossible), but the Conservative government was consistent in its priorities and efforts in attempting to establish school management at a local level. Devolved school management policies perhaps offer another opportunity for boards to be involved in a management partnership. Actual developments are discussed in Chapter 11.

PART III

The English connection: governing bodies and political ideology since 1944

English Governing Bodies

This chapter traces the development of governing bodies in England particularly since 1944.

Conservative ideology and its influence on educational policy is discussed. The impact of the Taylor Report and subsequent revival of governing bodies is considered.

Development of governing bodies through the education reform legislation of the 1980s is reviewed.

Governing bodies in England since 1944

6 Governing bodies, changing focus and development

6.1 Introduction

Scotland has no tradition of governing bodies in state schools. Despite having a separate and distinctive educational system (O'Brien, 1995; Clark and Munn, 1997), Scotland has not been immune to changes to schooling particularly in the years of successive Conservative governments since 1979. Many of the recent reforms in Scottish education, including school boards, can trace their origins to developments in England where governing bodies have been afforded greater control and powers by recent legislation. A brief review of the history of governing bodies and analysis of changes in England may help to illuminate the attempts to reform school councils and the introduction and scope of school boards.

In England the concept of governors is not new (Deem and Brehony, 1993b). Appendix B of the Taylor Report (1977, pp.141-194) provides a "historical retrospect 597-1945" on the theme of "School Managing and Governing Bodies" from the arrival of St Augustine and the establishment of schools by his successors to the passing of the 1944 Education Act. In the fifteenth century the involvement of laymen in school foundation and management became more common and this developed into making "local laymen the trustees of a school" (*ibid.* p.143). Such development is taken up by Sallis (1977, pp.100-105) who briefly describes the 600 year old history of involvement in the "establishment and management" of schools. Two great Commissions of the 19th century (Clarendon and Taunton) both recommended that all schools should have governing bodies.

Concepts such as 'guardian' and 'trustee' are to the fore and, interestingly, control of the curriculum rested with governors, teachers being responsible for determining 'how to teach'. The modern debate about lay interference in the curriculum, coupled with acceptance of professional dominance, skill and experience in the management of schools is mirrored in the mid 1860s. As Sallis remarks (*op cit.*, p.102)

Two things stand out. The first is that the current concern about governors' 'intrusion' into the curriculum, and the presentation of the 1986 Education Act as daring and revolutionary, rest on the assumption that the teacher's territory is sanctified by history and law.

The provision of schooling was secured by the 1870 Education Act which founded the partnership between locally-elected bodies and central government. Schools were to have managers or governors whose task was "... to protect the individuality and variety of schools against too much bureaucratic interference..." (*op cit.*, p.106). Again present-day concerns about schools and governance find echoes in earlier times.

While this interpretation of the history of lay involvement in school governance is legitimate it must be viewed in the context of 19th century trends postulated by Baron (1981, pp.18-19):

...increasingly clear lines had been drawn between the functions of elected representatives, administrators and teachers and that distinctions had been underlined by institutional arrangements comprising closed examination and reporting systems, graded salary scales, prescribed conditions of service and codes of professional behaviour. Parents, pupils and the 'community' also had their place but did not enter into the decision-making process, save through the general machinery of representative government.

6.2 The Education Act, 1944 and its legacy

The Education Act of 1944 is viewed by many educational (Kogan, 1978; MacLure, 1985; Ranson, 1990b; Lawton, 1994) and political (Middlemas, 1979; Dutton, 1991) commentators as a watershed in educational legislation seeking to be a "significant part of a broader reconstituting of the social and political order" (Ranson, 1990b, p.1). Certainly its perceived partnership of teachers, central government and local authorities was sustained for forty years (Sallis, *op cit.*, p.108-110). Deem (1990, p.154) has a more cautious view of the four decades since the 1944 Act, because of the imbalance evident in the 'partnership' eg. little direct involvement by central government, a marginal role, if at all, for governors and 'managers' (as they were known in primary schools) and parents while teachers and in particular headteachers becoming increasingly viewed as autonomous experts despite the powers and overview at local level by the local authorities.

The revival of research interest in English school governing bodies in the early 1980s reflected potential changes to their form and function. Kogan *et al.* (1984) note that, at that time, the 1980 Education Act had not been followed by the issue of Model Articles; therefore, the existing powers of School Governors harked back to the Model Articles of 1945 which followed the 1944 Act. They agreed that the 1944 Education Act [Section 17(1)] still set the main parameters for school government even in the early 1980s and then reviewed what the 1944 Act said. Kogan *et al.* noted that the notion of individual schools, individually governed, was firmly enshrined in the 1944 Act.

The individuality and uniqueness of each school as an institution have been given statutory recognition. (*op cit.*, p.3).

They refer to Baron and Howell (1974) and the conclusion that this insistence on individuality was in response to pressure from those who supported the more desirable features of public schools and grammar schools. Not everyone shared such views of course and different practices existed for many years after 1944. By the 1960s, actual practice with regard to school governance still varied widely throughout the country (Deem, 1990) with some County Boroughs having individual governing bodies, while others had only one governing body for all schools and others had grouped governing bodies of some kind for two or three schools together. This practice was similar in primary and secondary schools. The causes of this diverse pattern of governance were 'history and inertia' (Baron and Howell, 1974). For example, some authorities claimed they had never had governing bodies and therefore did not see the need to have them, while others depended very much on the views of the Chief Education Officer (Kogan, *et al.*, 1984, p.4). The justifications for such practices, included:

- the primacy of the elected member in local government arrangements;
- the difficulties of recruiting lay governors;
- and the need to have predictable behaviour of individuals and groups with whom Education Officers worked.

Such arguments were used to support group governing bodies controlled by elected members. Other ideas (*op cit.*, p.4), however, were used to justify individual governing bodies, viz

- the uniqueness of the school as an institution;
- autonomy of the headteacher (and the need for him or her not to be

- at the mercy of the Local Education Authority);
- and the need to give County Schools parity of status with borough denominational schools.

It should be noted that teachers were expressly omitted from participating in governing bodies by the 1945 Model Instrument, but during the 1970s many EAs began to allow teacher representation too, perhaps recognising the potential benefits of 'worker participation' (cf discussion of Cole's theories in Chapter 3).

- **A more questioning approach?**

Sallis (1988, p.111) describes the system researched by Baron and Howell as moribund. The Taylor Report (1977: 2.9, 2.11; pp.7-8) strongly supported the view that there was little evidence to suggest that the role of school governors was taken at all seriously. The power and decision-making most certainly lay with headteachers while governors frequently endorsed the view that the curriculum in particular was a professional domain. In certain areas governing bodies "did not, in any real sense, exist at all" (*op cit.*, p.8). Despite existing legislation and the powers afforded to governing bodies by the 1945 Model Instrument there was "no guarantee that managing and governing bodies would play the role originally intended for them" (*op cit.*, p.8). Elsewhere in education concerns were being aired and the developing ideas about school governance in the 1970s reflected the public, political and professional debates concerned with schooling issues such as standards, accountability, and the nature of the curriculum and progressive methodology (Lawton, 1994). As I have noted, the 1970s was a decade of concern about general educational standards and whether schools in particular were preparing young people for the demands of a technological society and also whether parental

wishes were, in a way, influencing the education of their children (Kogan *et al.*, 1984, pp. 4-6). George Baron (1981, p.1) suggested

A feature of school systems in many countries over the past fifteen years has been the interest shown in setting up or reforming councils or boards concerned with the government of individual schools... The general trend of this movement is to involve far more people than hitherto in the decision-making and opinion-forming processes in education.

A number of pressure groups emerged in this period (Mahoney, 1988, p.6) and Baron (1981, p.19) suggested that the self-contained world of the school was being challenged,

...because of the emergence of often small but influential groups claiming greater involvement for parents, ethnic minorities, the poor and the deprived...

The notion of parent as client grew up in this period, reflecting a great deal of activity in the United States of America where increased decentralisation of educational decision-making to Local Community School Boards was being requested. In the United Kingdom, school governing bodies were regarded as a device to allow this to occur, and parents were now being included by many LEAs in the composition of school governing bodies.

- **The Taylor Report (1977)**

Throughout the United Kingdom there were attempts to address issues deriving from greater participation of lay personnel in relation to schools via school councils or boards. The Astin Report (Astin, 1979) for Northern Ireland and the Taylor Report (Taylor, 1977) for England and Wales were the result of Committees of Enquiry established by government, while the

Glasgow University Report (1980) was a research study funded by the Secretary of State for Scotland at the request of the Scottish Parent Teacher Council. These reports differ in their findings and emphases, reflecting the nature of the issues they address eg both Taylor and Astin were concerned with long established procedures for participation, whereas the Glasgow University study was researching the comparatively recently established school councils. Some interesting comparisons can be made between these Reports and this is attempted below, but first a consideration of the Taylor Report.

The Taylor Committee was established to:

review the arrangements for the management and government of maintained primary and secondary schools in England and Wales, including the composition and functions of bodies of managers and governors, and their relationships with local education authorities, with head teachers and staffs of schools, with parents of pupils and the local community at large; and to make recommendations. (pp.15-16)

Sallis (1977, p.129) selects some of the dominant themes of the Report:

- school's need for a body of concerned local people to ensure the school was responsive to those it served;
- the ending of group boards and the move to one board per school;
- control over the curriculum;
- the condemnation of LEA dominance of governing bodies to be replaced with an equal partnership of parents, LEA, staff, community and pupils. (Although it must be noted that the historical tradition of LEA members did continue.)

The Report's principal recommendations relating to membership of governing bodies sought to confine membership between eight and twenty-four;

- 25% to be elected by school staff;
- 25% appointed by the LEA;
- 25% to be elected from the body of parents with children attending the school and
- the remaining 25% of members to be co-opted from the community.

Responsibility for the general life of the school was to be delegated by the LEA to the governing body, while partnership was stressed and fully acknowledged by a commitment to communication and consultation with all interested parties.

- **Taylor briefly compared to other UK developments**

As noted above, the Taylor Report was not the only report on these themes in the late 1970s. Scotland and Northern Ireland had developments too. As Taylor was the first, it had an influence on the Scottish and Northern Irish which is acknowledged eg Glasgow University Report (p.57) in its consideration of evidence from other countries; but its influence did not necessarily extend to full agreement with all the Taylor recommendations eg GU Report (p.73) where membership is contested, or when discussing control over the curriculum (p.38).

There was general agreement in these reports about certain issues and approaches. The one council per school model is endorsed by all three Reports and they are in agreement that councils should be free to discuss any matter relating to the school and to offer advice. Naturally, given the era, accountability looms large in a variety of ways in each and with

differing interpretations or definitions of the concept. The same is true when considering definitions of other terms such as curriculum - where different definitions are employed in each report (Astin, p.27; Taylor, 6.22: p.52; GU, p.40) - partnership, politics, and participation. Emphases also vary and the Scottish report stresses home-school partnership as an important function of the school council; this is an emphasis not shared by Taylor and Astin although they recognise the importance of partnership between parents and teachers. The Taylor Report therefore offers legitimate insights into the trends and considerations of the period; it was also instrumental in bringing change to governing bodies in England and Wales.

6.3 The aftermath of Taylor

Many of the Taylor Report's recommendations (Mahoney, 1988, pp.7-16) found their way into subsequent legislation despite opposition to many of its recommendations by LEAs principally concerned with the threat to their majority control, and the teacher unions incensed by the threat to teacher control of the curriculum (Sallis, p.132); the Taylor Report was followed up by the Education Act 1980, but its proposals fell short of the Report's recommendations - "delayed and diluted" is Sallis' dismissal of the Act (*op cit.*, p.133). However, the Act did confirm and consolidate the position of teachers and parents on school governing bodies. Kogan *et al.* (1984) suggest that giving teachers an official role in school government was more radical than introducing Parent Governors. They summarise Bacon's (1978) view on such a development as,

Teacher Governors to be but feeble and disadvantaged protagonists of worker power on Governing Bodies of their own institutions, inhibited from representing the shopfloor by the presence of the headteacher.
(Kogan *et al.*, 1984, p.5).

While this move towards 'worker participation' in school management may well have been a pale imitation of developments in industrial democracy, it does not necessarily reflect models of accountability of teachers which were becoming increasingly part of the debate on education in the 1970s and which are discussed in Chapter 4.

Kogan *et al.* (*op cit.*, Chapter 8) constructed four models of governing bodies and described each under the following categories - authority; representation; resources; public relations; style of working; demands of the work; basis of the model. It is useful to summarise the main attributes of each model informed by the views of Golby (1985):

a. The "accountable school" focused governing body

The focus of this model is to ensure the satisfactory day-to-day management and operation of the school within carefully defined policy limitations set by the LEA. This approach provides a 'safeguard' for the local authority. In such a model, the appointing authority (LEA) is predominant and the responsibility of the governing body would vary depending on the degree of delegated power. Resources required by the governing body again would vary but a clerk would seem essential. Public relations work would be minimal; while the working style would reflect political leadership hearing reports from professionals from the school. Depending on the discretion allowed to governors their role could be little more than symbolic and untaxing in terms of work demands. The model exists on the basis that the governing body exists to control the school but it was noted as part of the research findings that despite Taylor's advocacy of this model with greater authority, there were few examples of this type of governing body.

b. The advisory governing body

In this model the focus remains on the school, where the school is 'called to account', and governors views must be given due consideration. The main purpose would appear to be to justify and monitor professional activities against any form of mismanagement. A broad membership is expected with appointees conversant with the values of the neighbourhood. A prime concern would be public relations solely with respect to the school and the governing body would not require much in the way of resourcing. Professional leadership is the key to such a body on which there will be a tendency to listen to rational argument. The demands on governors will be moderate.

c. The supportive governing body

This model is characterised by a focus on the school but also with a concern to influence the rest of the educational system. Such a model includes the school giving an account rather than being called to account. While involved with resources and management problems, governors of such a body will view the school's aims as a professional concern presented by the headteacher. Representation is important as a channel of communication to influence holders such as the LEA but also in terms of what an individual can contribute to the school. Promotion of the school is viewed as a main concern with the governing body often acting as a pressure group. A professional style of leadership which recognises the potential importance of individual contributions is characteristic of such a model. The largely symbolic presence of governors makes their task relatively undemanding.

d. The mediating governing body

The local system of education is the main focus for such a body, which

requires to be informed and consulted on issues affecting the school.

Often the principal aim is to act as a 'buffer' between competing interests.

Much information is required of the LEA, the community and the school by this model. Visibility of the governing body is important as the tendency is for governors to be delegates rather than trustees (cf. Chapter 3).

Consensus is sought on the wide range of concerns which this model will be involved with. Such a model is very demanding of governors as they garner information from their own interest groups and constituencies.

There are clear links with stake-holder theory in such a model (cf. Chapter 3).

In addition to identifying such models, Kogan *et al.* (1984, p.7) offer 8 main purposes or "approaches" adopted by governing bodies in England and Wales. These purposes include:

- provision responsive to local community needs;
- partnership in the control of schools and education policy - a purpose which increases representation from new 'constituencies', particularly parents;
- public accountability and measuring efficiency of schools;
- recognising and promoting the unique character of each institution.

Of some concern was the developing notion that economic circumstances were becoming difficult and perhaps more central planning rather than a devolved model would prove more helpful. At the time of writing, Kogan *et al.* suggested that "school governing bodies are 'Sleeping Beauties' still awaiting the kiss of politics" (*op cit.* p.9). To what extent has subsequent legislation provided such a 'kiss'?

6.4 The political dimension

- **Conservative political ideology since 1945**

While acknowledging the problematic nature of the claim to political consensus, (Dutton, 1991, p.2) argues that since 1945, British politics has witnessed both the rise and fall of a consensus in the sense that despite party differences and lack of total agreement "the political parties operated within a given framework" (*ibid.* p.7). It is suggested that such cohesion was initially created during the war years when fundamental changes took place in political attitudes; Dutton (*ibid.* pp. 10-11) suggests that

The war inevitably changed people's perceptions of the proper role of government in society... Centralized planning would be the panacea for the nation's postwar problems, including the creation of a better and fairer society.

The belief that a consensus prevailed in the post-war years has been denigrated by subsequent Labour and Conservative politicians. For some Labour supporters, notably Tony Benn, there is the view that 1945 saw the beginning of "a welfare-capitalist consensus" (*ibid* p.22) which prohibited the implementation of left-wing socialism; while the Conservative New Right of the 1970s regarded 1945 as inaugurating "thirty years of collectivism and bureaucratic centralism" (*ibid* p.23). This clearly demonstrates that political parties carry a broad spectrum of opinions, but still does not deny the basic premise that consensus prevailed. This cohesion could be said to be firmly rooted in the centre of political debate.

In a sense this is a consequence of representative democracy (cf 3.6), for as Dutton points out, political parties have to appeal beyond their 'natural' constituencies if they are to gain a majority. Policies and proposals which are widely acceptable inevitably prevail and more often than not it is

difficult for electors to distinguish between parties who try to dominate the central ground. Middlemas devotes a chapter (1979, pp.389-429) to "The Cult of Equilibrium" which is his descriptor of the period between 1945 and 1965.

These twenty years saw the apogee of political stability, industrial equilibrium and economic prosperity, fortified by prolonged absence of ideological or class cleavages in society or the political parties. (*ibid* p.428)

1965 may be the year in which the consensus began to break down although in the era of Wilson and Heath, there was still little to distinguish the Labour and Conservative planks of major policy. There will be those, however, who speak from left or right of centre who in terms of gaining power will attempt to persuade their own party membership that the political high ground is elsewhere and that the 'centre' has moved. From 1979, when one may suggest the fall of consensus really begins, Mrs Thatcher in her terms of office could be said to have been significantly successful in persuading her party and the electorate on a number of occasions to accept her far from 'centrist' views although it remains to be seen whether her successors will maintain the impetus she fuelled or whether they will seek to retreat to the more recognisably consensus politics of the centre which Labour so successfully employed in the 1997 election. The signs were that Mr Major moved back from 'Thatcherism' despite being regarded as the potential guardian of that approach or if this is not the case then the mainstream Conservative political party has lost its appetite for change and renewal or simply exhausted themselves of radical ideas?

- **The educational consensus**

For education, the consensus emerged after the publication of the White Paper 'Educational Reconstruction' in 1943, which laid the foundation for Butler's Education Act of 1944. Dutton (*ibid* p.17) remarks,

Later controversy on the issue of comprehensive schools can too easily obscure the widespread support, lasting until the 1960's, for the principles enshrined in Butler's Act, including the segregation of eleven-year-olds into grammar, secondary modern and technical education.

Butler's own view of the Act (Butler 1971, p.125) and its aftermath is interesting:

It will, I think, be generally conceded that many of the opportunities for progress offered by the Act of 1944 have been profitably seized... But although, by the late 1960s, a series of reports from the central Advisory Committee and other bodies was thought to be carrying the system near to the threshold of a further massive redefinition, not all the promises of the original Act had yet been fulfilled.

The Butler Education Act was put into operation by a Labour government, and while as Butler notes not all of the Act's provisions were put in place, there was little breakdown of the consensus until the advent of comprehensive schools and the threat to grammar schools under the 1960s Labour administration.

Ranson (1990a, p.7) argues that there have been three phases of "major institutional change in education" since 1945:-

a. the process of establishing the tripartite system post 1944;

- b. the phase of comprehensive reorganisation;
- c. the phase of falling rolls in the 1970s and 80s.

It is during these phases that prevailing educational values, underpinned by political consensus or alternative values, may be identified. Ranson (*op cit.*, p.90-106) highlights a number of dominant values. The immediate post-war years were concerned with the values of expanding education and providing universal secondary education for everyone. It was to be 'a national system locally administered'. LEAs were to bring forward proposals for approval by the centre but the tenor was one of partnership and working together. Ransom describes the ministerial role as 'adjudicatory' with respect to the reorganisation plans of local authorities.

Comprehensive schools were part of an expansion of education but were viewed as requiring specific planning. This provided an opportunity for a new partnership between the centre and LEAs, and as Ranson notes (p.92),

The emphasis in this period was upon decentralized, professional, planning within broadly agreed political objectives.

On taking office as Secretary of State for Education in 1970, Mrs Thatcher stressed the importance of individual schools and began a process of liaison between Secretary of State and parents which attempted to bypass the professional bureaucracy of the LEAs. Competition was introduced to the education system, but parental 'rights' were allied to a significant central government control. This tension between consumers and big government has been evident in Conservative educational thinking since 1970.

By the mid-1970s the balance of power had swung to Ministers. Ranson lists their weapons (p.94) as

...the strategies of persuasion, promoting policy in speeches and statements; forming policy planning committees with local councillors and officers; and issuing procedural advice to LEAs.

In the 1980s the issue of parental powers came to the fore as parents were encouraged by successful challenges in court to particular LEA proposals for school reorganization. The parental role allied with the concept of choice became part of a dominant ideology within Conservative political thinking. Education Acts throughout this period are illustrative of the principal concepts underpinning such ideology (Sallis, 1988; Jonathan, 1993). In terms of education who or what had precipitated the decline in Conservative acceptance of the prevailing consensus?

- **Conservative ideological thrust of the 1970s and 1980s**

St John-Stevas (1977, p.11) recognises that as "debate began in the 1950s, it was relatively non-partisan", but that this changed in the 1960s particularly in 1965 with the publication of Circular 10/65; it was at this moment he claims that comprehensive education became "the object of political dogma" on the part of the Labour Party. It was suggested by Beales, Blaug, Veale, and West (1970) that the 1970 Education Act would result in neighbourhood schools, a deterioration from the ideal.

Several years later, *The Crisis in Education* (Boyson, 1975) outlined the views being expressed by the 'New Right' at that moment. Boyson's main thesis is that modern education was failing the population because it

lacked effectiveness and promoted the wrong values. Modernist approaches such as 'discovery learning' and the rise of the comprehensive school were leading to illiteracy, truancy, violence and indiscipline. The main thrust of his approach can be summarised by his claim that

Conservatives believe in a free society where people have choice and responsibility, where restrictions are minimised and where all are encouraged and indeed helped to achieve their potential.

(Boyson, 1973, pp.3-4)

He viewed 'child-centred' approaches as retrograde, suggesting that basic skills in reading and writing had deteriorated. He strongly advocated "the education voucher as part of Conservative long-term policy" (p.11), which it was suggested would lead to parental not political control of schools and an increased variety of provision. Better teachers, not more are advocated and Boyson related reducing class sizes with decreasing standards of attainment. Such approaches are readily endorsed in other Conservative political literature of the time (St John-Stevas, 1974; St John-Stevas and Brittan, 1975)

Another prominent Conservative pamphleteer of the period (St John-Stevas, 1977) takes up the debate in the mid-70s by suggesting (pp.7-8) that,

...the major theme of Conservative education policy has been the preservation and promotion of quality and the raising of educational standards...

and attacking the comprehensive ideal outright.

We reject the socialist obsession with equality which threatens to destroy all that is best in our educational system.

He appeals to the notion of consensus (p.9)

...I hope that we may be able in time to re-establish a consensus so that education will be taken out of party politics. The future of our children is far too important to jeopardise it by treating them as party political footballs.

and

There are signs that in some respects the political parties are moving closer together on educational matters.

Despite a reference to James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech initiating the 'Great Debate', the distinctiveness of the Conservative message is repeatedly reinforced. The Conservatives are about standards and certainties of methods, they are about variety of provision both between schools and also within schools (p.50). They are also about parents and their rights to more information from and about schools, and about accountability to local communities. They support the increased involvement of parents in school governance suggested by the Taylor Report. (Taylor, 1977) Such views dominated the Conservative party on educational matters and the resultant legislation attempted to realise their vision.

6.5 Ideology in Practice: The Legislation of the 1980s

- **The Education (No.2) Act 1986**

Reporting their research, (Baginsky, Baker and Cleave, 1991, p.7) suggest

The provisions of the 1986 Education Act and the Education Reform Act 1988 combine to give governors more power and

make more demands on them than before... Changes have been rapid and pervasive... it is not surprising that governors held various perceptions of what the role of the governing body now is.

The titles of some recent books on school governance also indicate an uncertainty in the developing role of governors in England and Wales : *Moving to Management : School Governors in the 1990s* (Thody, 1992) ; *School Co-operation : New Forms of Local Governance* (Ranson and Tomlinson, 1994) and *School Governors: Leaders or Followers?* (Thody, 1994).

In 1986, a new Education Bill was announced for England and Wales:

The main thrust is to standardize and redefine the composition of school governing bodies, to give parents a greater say and reduce alleged political domination by LEAs. But the government has withdrawn its plan to give parents an overall majority...

...Membership of school governing bodies will be reformed so that no single interest will predominate...

A new category of co-opted member will be created, to be chosen jointly by the other governors. Ministers anticipate this group will include local employers and businessmen.

The emphasis is on "balance", and broader membership of governing bodies.

(TES: New Bill will give parents a louder voice, Mike Durham, p.10, 28.2.86)

Mahoney (1988, Chapter 3) provides some details of the clauses contained in the 1986 Education Act. He was unfortunately confident enough to suggest that,

The 1986 Education Act can be seen as the final step on the long road travelled from the 1944 Act.

Certainly he recognised that the preceding Green Paper, *Parental Influence at School: a new framework for School Government in England and Wales*, designed to generate discussion, and the subsequent publication of the White Paper, *Better Schools* in the spring of 1985, were reflected in the 1986 legislation. Concerns about standards and assessment, and teaching quality were all included in the White Paper reflecting some of the ideological issues of the time described by Sallis (1988, p.139) as a period of "the hidden curriculum of LEA and teacher-bashing, or with the establishment of a free market in education". The proposals contained under the heading 'The Legal Framework' were concerned with school governing bodies. A principal concern in relation to the reforms outlined by the Green Paper which some viewed as a step towards a consumer-led approach (Sallis, 1988, p.135) was related to the proposed parental majority which had received a very hostile reception.

Nevertheless, for the first time a national system of school governance was proposed with a degree of uniformity not previously experienced. The 1986 Act itself provided for LEAs to be responsible for Instruments and Articles of Government; established the composition of governing bodies which effectively ended LEA domination; if elections were impractical then appointment of parent governors was allowed; links with local business were encouraged by co-option of representatives. The main areas of responsibility for governing bodies were articulated thus: "shall provide for the conduct of the school to be under the direction of the governing body". Governing bodies were to receive a statement of curriculum policy from the LEA and the school and particular attention was to be given to sex education, where governors had a duty to decide if sex education was to form part of a school's curriculum, and political indoctrination. Annual

reports to parents by governors including an annual meeting was to become a duty. Other clauses related to finance; appointment and dismissal of staff (still controlled by the LEA); reports by governing body and headteacher; the appraisal of teachers; training and information for governors. The expectations of lay volunteers was very high and as Deem (1990, p.158) notes there was no mention of time off work or compensation for loss of income. Presumably it was anticipated that volunteers did not require such provision even if it were designed to allow them to better exercise their new duties under the Act. The Act was regarded as extremely complicated (Mahoney, 1988) and the Times Education Supplement's comment sums up the potential of such complexity thus,

The path is now littered with new pitfalls for the unwary. Litigious parents, governors who fancy themselves as barrack-room lawyers, heads who are jealous of their prerogatives (as they jolly well should be) - all will be tempted to rush to their solicitors every time one protagonist or another fails to observe the letter of this complicated (and for much of its length) unnecessary law. (24.10.86)

Such an interpretation of the Act is far removed from the recommendations of the Taylor Report and its emphases on partnership. It would be easy to dismiss the 1986 Act as part of a period of legislation driven by ideological dominance but this is not the case. Despite its complications it promised much for parents and lay people interested in schools. It also inhibited skilful headteachers identified in research (Deem, 1990, p.168) who had proved adept in the past at manipulating governors and ensuring their support.

- **The Education Reform Act 1988**

There can have been few Acts of Parliament concerned with education which have created such polarised opinion and initiated fundamental change. When introducing the legislation in 1987, the Secretary of State, Kenneth Baker, said the proposals would

galvanise parental involvement in schools. Parents will have more choice. They will have greater variety of schools to choose from. We will create new types of schools. Parents will be far better placed to know what their children are being taught and what they are learning... And (they) will introduce competition into the public provision of education ... which will stimulate better standards all round.

(DES, Press release, 20 November, 1987)

When speaking in the debate on the second reading of the Bill, he said with reference to the existing education system:

We need to inject a new vitality into that system. It has become producer-dominated...

The purpose of the Bill is to secure delegation and widen choice. We want to see more decision making in the hands of individual schools and colleges.

(Quoted in Haviland, 1988, p.2).

This confirms that more than participation or accountability was the concern; informed choice leading to the competition of the market-place which will raise standards are consumer-oriented aims. Devolved power can lead to change at local level reflecting local priorities, needs and requirements; the irony is that while the Act is concerned with such devolution of aspects of school management, it also centralised the "national curriculum" and provided government with more control over schools than it previously had enjoyed. There is logic to this, however,

because if the power to spend money is devolved, there is a potential danger that a school could adopt a idiosyncratic curriculum; the safeguard of a common core or 'national curriculum' appears necessary. Education authorities in such a regulatory framework find themselves being 'squeezed' from the schools and from the centre and therefore their power is inhibited and this was consistent with Conservative thinking.

The 1988 Act concerned itself with increasing the autonomy of schools and making them more responsive to parental wishes and choice by creating new institutions such as City Technology Colleges; encouraging 'opting out' from local authority control or taking on 'grant-maintained status' (GMS); providing for more open enrolment; and moving towards a devolved or delegated model of financing those schools who would remain in local authority control. The establishment of the 'national curriculum' allowed scope for central government to increase the devolution of management responsibilities to schools. The Act was building upon earlier provision of the 1980s which, as we have noted above in turn sought to make schools more accountable and to increase the scope of parental choice.

The Act has been described (Ball, 1990; pp. 60-61) as difficult to read:

... it is complex, multifaceted, and the product of several different sets of interests and influences...But it is not in its conception or its purposes a bits and pieces Act. At the heart of the Act is an attempt to create an educational market.

The influences and interests referred to have been categorised by (Ball, 1990; 1994) and by (Lawton, 1994) as the debate between the 'industrial trainers' and the 'old humanists' (cf discussion on conservative political

ideologies above) . This internal conflict of the Conservative party was not resolved by the 1988 Act (yet another Education Act was passed under the aegis of John Patten in 1993), tensions remained, but it did succeed in setting in place legislation which consolidated several policies designed to create an educational market based on several principles. Ball (1990, pp. 61-69) outlines the elements of such a market as choice, competition, diversity, funding and organisation. He demonstrates how schools have reacted to such legislation with an increased emphasis on public image (1990, p.61) or impression management or attentiveness by schools and headteachers to their clientele (1994, p.53; p.99). Ball also argues that the legislation has changed approaches to management with the creation of a new professionalised cadre of teacher managers concerned more with resources, efficiency and satisfying parental wishes or prejudices than with being leading professional educators. This 'new managerialism', as it applies to school governance, reflects the view that schools may be run as small businesses and that governors may be likened to members of a board of directors; however, as Wallace (1990, p.237) observes

It is only the management of institutions which has been delegated. The main 'freedom' gained by schools and colleges is to be efficient. What they have to do, in terms of both policies and procedures, is to be determined by others.

The 'others' in this instance being the local authorities and the government; particularly critical is centralised curriculum control which is the price of local management of schools (*op. cit.*, p.238). Financial power is also constrained by level of funding which is controlled also by the government, if one step removed. An analysis of devolved management in Scottish schools (Hartley, 1994a, p.131), confirms that "...the discretion assigned to schools concerns only the *means*, not the *ends*, of the

educational endeavour".

It should be noted that the devolved management scheme introduced in Scotland (cf Chapter 11) based on the precedents of parental choice of school, the establishment of school boards and the experiment of devolved management of resources (DMR) in Strathclyde Region (Hartley, *ibid.*, pp.132-133), differs quite markedly from the English model reflecting also the different powers and functions of Scottish school boards from governing bodies in England.

- **The impact of the 1988 Act on school governance in England**
Deem (1990) and Deem and Wilkins(1992) suggest that much of the 1988 legislation is dependent "at least on the tacit consent of governors" (1990, p.159). Governors will have key roles in determining whether a school seeks to 'opt out' and have responsibility for ensuring their school conforms to the National Curriculum for example. Local Management of Schools (LMS) demands a range of skills and involves governors in increased responsibilities which volunteers without adequate training may find difficult to cope with. Deem confirms other estimates of the 1988 Act viz

Reshaping governing bodies is ostensibly supposed to be about transferring power from producers to consumers and about making schools more 'effective'. (*op cit.* p.160)

Deem, writing in 1990, argues that while much of the discussion on the role of governors in the 1980s was about increasing the participation of employers and parents, such a consumer-producer model of education is only one expression of increased involvement. Moves towards greater

democracy and active citizenship are not necessarily best served by a consumer power approach, which in itself may be a vehicle to hasten the privatisation of state schooling. Parent governors for example are not the only parent consumers and being a parent governor is only one expression of parental involvement. One form of parental involvement may mean being active in the classroom but having little concern or interest in the 'management' of the school; there is scope for a very practical partnership between parent and teacher because legally the parent is responsible for the education of the individual child. Those who do become parent governors may also have difficulties in knowing whose interests they represent and how they relate to their 'constituency'. They may be socialised into a way of thinking and acting which suits the headteacher. The governing body itself; the parental body; the school; their own individual interest or in those instances where governing bodies are overtly politicised, a political party? The number of teachers emerging as parent governors (not in their teaching school) has also caused some alarm and the development of the view that "A teacher is not regarded as a real parent" (*op cit.*, p.164). Deem also suggests that governing bodies will require to become more political because they are concerned with the exercise of power in running schools. The lack of consensus about education means inevitably that governors will find themselves in conflict with fellow governors, with the professionals and with central government. Nield (1992, p.45) while suggesting that "the basic context is still about accountability" indicates that,

Important questions are being raised about how, in practice, governing bodies will participate in the managing process, by what structures and procedures and through what relationships with headteachers and management teams.

Despite continuing opportunities for partnership within a context or framework of accountability, there would appear to be substantial moves from schools being accountable to governing bodies to the situation where governing bodies control schools, and as a result one may postulate the emergence of a fifth model of governing body to join the four identified by Kogan *et al.* (1984) viz *the controlling governing body*. Deem and Wilkins (1992, p.70) suggest that,

Governing schools has undoubtedly become a much more demanding activity with the impact of the 1986 and 1988 Education Acts, particularly once schools receive delegated budgets.

There are significant differences between governing bodies and Scottish school boards. The structures, functions, powers and processes are different especially where the headteacher is concerned eg structurally the governing body stands in direct line of authority between the LEA and HT whereas the Scottish structure has power delegated to the Head. Deem cites research evidence that in secondary schools, chairs of governing bodies and sub-committees particularly of finance, were prominent in "shaping the parameters of management policy alongside headteachers and other members of senior management teams". The activities of governing bodies were beginning to change too. An NFER survey reported less discussion of items such as sex education, governor training and charging for school activities which had dominated a 1989 survey. The 1989-90 issues had become LMS/resource allocation; the National Curriculum; annual parents' meeting; staff appointments; building maintenance; aims and objectives of the school and the School Development Plan (Keys and Fernandes, 1990, pp.37-38).

- **Moves to management?**

Ribbins (1989, p.194) asks whether commentators should be "bracketing together" headteachers and governors as managers of the school. Ribbins discusses the clear responsibilities of the governing body as set out in Circular 7/88 which stresses the collaborative nature of their responsibilities. Governing bodies while being exhorted to participate in a much greater way are to do so in some form of partnership with headteachers. Examples abound - on staff appointments the Head has the right to give advice and governors the duty to consider such advice. While a governing body might legitimately exclude a Head from a range of discussions and decisions it would perhaps be a recipe for disagreement and major conflict, but has history indicated that governing bodies would adopt such a posture? Ribbins argues that historically, despite the efforts to democratize school management, governors have consistently played a modest role no matter their powers. (p.204)

One might postulate therefore that the move to management may prove difficult for individual governors and entire governing bodies.

Differentiation between school management and governance becomes critical. Davies and West-Burnham (1990) in their discussion of training for governors to cope with the demands of LMS, discuss the decision-making structures within schools; they argue it is inappropriate for governors to be involved in the specifics but crucial that they establish policy in partnership with senior school managers. The training approach adopted by Davies and West-Burnham is a team building approach because it is argued that effective teams will make better decisions thus transforming the governors into an effective element of the management of schools particularly in relation to LMS and finance. There are of course inherent dangers in using

training to build such teams if conformity is the goal (O'Brien, 1990); however, the process undertaken by participants in a Davies and West-Burnham workshop respects toleration and expression of differing viewpoints while actively seeking to achieve a consensus. Other research suggests a different relationship between governors and school professionals is developing. Downes (1988, p.159) suggested:

Governors will initially be baffled and perhaps overawed by their new role. But some governors will have relevant experience... Soon governors will enjoy their new power, as too often in the past they have been groping for a role.

While Kogan *et al.* (1984) recognised differences and lack of harmony within governing bodies, they found little evidence of frequent conflict. Deem and Brehony's (1993a; 1994) 4 year multi-site case study of 10 governing bodies in two LEAs provides limited evidence that

...partly as a consequence of the greater responsibilities given to governing bodies, including the determination of head and deputy headteacher salaries, awarding of discretionary pay to other teachers and the need to give final approval to budgets, conflict rather than partnership may now be a more common feature of relationships between governors and schools.
(1993a, p.340)

This suggests that the tension between professional interests and lay governors may be increasing perhaps because of the necessary greater involvement of governors who have moved nearer centre stage in school management terms. Relationships require to be worked through, role differentiation clarified and perhaps reconciled because governors will be concerned with a range of roles in relation to different issues eg discretionary payments to staff may require them to act in a judicial

capacity (Nield, 1992, p.50).

Thody (1992) shares her vision that management and democracy can work together. Acknowledging the increased citizen involvement that governorship offers, she focuses on the three main approaches to the role of governor (*ibid.*, p.21) - director, consultant, representative - and the management activities which might flow from such roles. Much practical advice for governors is included on planning, personnel, financial matters, the law as it relates to governing bodies, public relations and reports from governors... Governors are viewed as an essential part of the 'management team' recognising their legal responsibilities and the limited time they have available; their tasks and responsibilities are shared/ executed by the school's professional managers. Thody (1994, p.15), in considering how governors will develop in the 1990s, suggests that experience since the 1988 Act allows one to differentiate "about what governors *can* do, as opposed to what the law implies they *should* do." Echoing earlier writers she proffers a typology of "the overt and covert functions of governing bodies" (p.28) and in the light of the contributions to the book, she concludes (pp.210-225) that confusions abound about the current role of governing bodies.

- **Moves to partnership?**

Golby (1993, p.65) confirms that "traditional ceremonial governorship with its vague and impotent spectatorship..." has ended. Increased and more focused involvement of parents with added responsibilities and new obligations has created a new climate for that often misunderstood or misinterpreted concept viz partnership. The Taylor Report called for a new partnership on the assumption that one existed and had to be changed or

developed. Golby (*ibid.* p.67) suggests that the post-war situation became a professional enclave particularly with reference to the central activities of the school ie the curriculum. He labels that form of partnership as 'honorific' and suggests there was little attempt after Taylor to effect anything other than the status quo, but now with new legislation there is an inexorable move towards a re-definition of the partnership relationship. This definition will be determined by how governors, particularly parent governors, conceptualise their developing situation. Golby argues that parent governors will add power to the partnership with teachers, not dilute teacher power but in a more equal way establish a common basis for concerted effort on behalf of schools and the education service. There will be benefits gained for local democracy and the concept of active citizenship and participation discussed in theoretical terms in Chapter 3 of this work. There are issues requiring resolution of course not least in relation to how representative governors are and representative of whom? Mechanisms for communication and feedback to and from electorates are important considerations, as will how they undertake the governing role as a trustee or mandated by an electorate in practical terms. The view of the governing body being likened to a Board of Directors is reported by Golby (p.74) but this again leads to the need for a clear distinction between governance and management. There is great scope for confusion and potential for conflict within the new partnerships on the clarity of such a distinction. Deem, Brehony and Hemmings, (1990, p.7) consider there are two levels of distinction between governance and management which permit misunderstandings or overlap of responsibilities to occur:

...(at the level of beliefs and at the level of practical action) and hence may become interpreted differently by heads and governors.

While on p.8 Deem *et al* go on to provide some evidence of difference of viewpoint emerging,

...there is one school where a governor has worked out his school's budget on his home computer; we have also witnessed discussions in which governors have said to their headteacher ...'we run this school now and we decide what is to be done' even though they may find themselves unable to do so in the event.

Inevitably the new governance arrangements will result in strange incidences occurring but they do provide opportunities for a serious extension of local democracy which is meaningful and not just lip-service.

- **Some conclusions with respect to governance in England**

Deem, Brehony and Heath (1995, pp.14-17) summarise the main effects on school governance of this recent period of legislation. Eligibility for school governance has been recast with an emphasis on parents and business people; governors have been given many new responsibilities eg they share responsibilities for delegated budgets and staffing with headteachers, while having a specific remit of holding an annual meeting for parents and determining specific curricular policy eg sex education (such powers were modified for secondary schools by the 1993 Act); headteachers are more accountable to governors. This has not happened in a vacuum, other areas in what was once termed the 'public sector' have been subject to change too. Not least the National Health Service where a 'quasi-market' of hospital trusts has emerged. For schools, the potential of governing bodies to direct and initiate change at local level is significant.

... governing bodies have stopped being bodies with vaguely defined powers of oversight of educational institutions and

have become powerful sites for the monitoring and regulation of professional educators. (*op cit.*, p.33)

While we may argue that the above has yet to be realised in a consistent and coherent way throughout England and Wales, the potential is clear. Partnership as advocated by the Taylor Report giving parents a say in the provision of schooling, now appears to be insufficient in the management of schools and the line between governance and management becomes increasingly blurred as the players find new positions and seek assurance that their role is appropriate and accepted.

- **How does the Scottish experience differ from England?**

Scotland has not been immune to Conservative policy and the attempt to reform school councils through the school board proposals with an enhanced role for parents in particular, the subsequent 'opting out' legislation and introduction of devolved school management can all be traced to associated developments in England. There are important differences and these will be illuminated in Part IV.

PART IV

The analysis

Reform of school councils

This chapter describes the build up to the 1984 consultative exercise on school councils.

The entire response to this consultative exercise is analysed and reported.

The views on school councils and related issues of those interviewed are analysed.

The reform of school councils

7 The SED Consultative Exercise on School Councils:

An analysis of the responses

7.1 Introduction

The Local Government (Scotland) Act of 1973 required the establishment of school councils which should have “functions of management and supervision”. Formation of these had begun by 1975 and two years later 302 school councils covered all state schools; on average 12 schools were serviced by a school council (Macbeth, MacKenzie and Breckinridge, 1980, p.9). There was no particular approach adopted by each of the Regional Authorities towards the functions or structures of these school councils. An independent research project was funded by SED after an initial request by the Scottish Parent Teacher Council (SPTC) to the Secretary of State “that the formative period of school councils be monitored” (Scottish Office Press Notice: Tuesday 5th February 1980). This dialogue between the SPTC, the SED and the University of Glasgow’s Department of Education resulted in a 2.5 year project which reported in 1980 with the publication, on 5th February 1980, by HMSO of *Scottish School Councils: Policy-Making, Participation or Irrelevance?* (also known as the Glasgow University Report).

On publication, there was initial hostility on radio from a professional association, the EIS; this was subsequently rescinded when the EIS representatives had time to reflect on the actual report and its recommendations regarding the role of headteachers which had initially been seen as threatening professional autonomy;

At first sight the report seems to suggest lay interference in the professional affairs of teachers which no one would dream of suggesting in the case of other professions and which other professions would not tolerate...

It is a very closely reasoned and informative report and three years of hard work cannot be taken lightly. The report will have to be studied with care before the EIS can reach any conclusions on it.

(Preliminary Observations by the EIS, 5 February, 1980)

Generally, the report was well received and considered to be an important evidential and discursive resource for those concerned with potential changes to existing arrangements for school councils or for their possible development as the report suggested.

...the Glasgow Report which was a comprehensive and convincing document. (Fortrose Academy School Council)

There were contrary views of the report, however, as the comment of another school council responding to the subsequent 1984 consultative exercise reveals;

Our final comment is a unanimous criticism of the document - SCOTTISH SCHOOL COUNCILS. Many conclusions appear to have been reached from subjective research which was selected mainly to support the reporting group's stance eg they cite examples from countries with entirely different educational systems to our own. Furthermore, only rarely do they explore the political rationale behind Councils and even more rarely do they mention parents as a body to be consulted. Of course school pupils scarcely figure at all in this woolly rambling document which may be of interest to academics but is of limited relevance to parties directly involved in Schools (*sic*) Councils. (Easterhouse School Council: No 2)

While the Association of Primary Head Teachers (Dundee Division) asserted the concern that

There appears to be a lack of realism in GU Report which could make one question the validity of its theoretical structure.

7.2 The consultative process

While its main thrust was evolutionary (*op cit.*, p.183), the report on school councils reached a number of conclusions (cf. Chapter 8 of the Report) and made several important recommendations. There was an expectation that the government might act on some of these as a consultative paper based on the report was promised by SED but this failed to appear in the immediate aftermath of publication.

Eventually in April 1984, the SED issued a consultative paper on school councils for response by 31 October 1984 (this deadline was extended at the request of councils particularly concerned with their own timelines and holiday periods). The consultative document was greeted by The Times Education Supplement Scotland (TESS, p.3, 20.4.84) with the headline '*Late*' Survey for school councils , and the view that the dilatory government response had led to adverse criticism; in its leader (p.2), concern was expressed about the delays over consultation and broken promises,

...school council members will notice that their labours count for little with government; a good official procrastinator would disguise the insult more effectively...Why the Government is so obviously in fear and trembling about giving the councils a modestly-better lot is hard to see.

and suggested there would be a greater impact on the morale of school

council members if their responses were ignored.

Members of school councils throughout Scotland have every reason to feel they are being treated with contempt.

(op cit.)

The consultative paper outlined the background to school councils, and indicated that the Secretary of State was keen to examine school council functions in relation to parents, eg would links with parents and community be better served outwith school councils? There was reference to the uniqueness of Scotland in Europe in not having one council per school quoting the EEC's *School and Family Report* (1983). The consultation paper also provided an Annex A which listed some of the recommendations of the 1980 Glasgow University Report, and an Annex B in the form of modified questionnaires directed at particular interested parties viz

- Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
- Education Authorities
- School Councils
- Other interested parties

These interested others included the teachers' professional associations, the Headteachers' Association, Scotland, some consumer oriented bodies such as the Scottish Consumer Council, the Colleges of Education and Universities and a range of responses was also forthcoming from PAs/ PTAs and individuals from such bodies plus individuals from schools or school councils. Not counting individual Regional Chief Executives or Directors of Education, some 40 'contributing bodies' were issued with the consultative paper. When one reviews the list of recipients it is interesting

to note that the vast bulk was directed at education or teacher bodies, while a few administrative bodies were consulted eg Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA). Religious interests were included with requests for views from the Church of Scotland Education Committee, the Episcopalian Church in Scotland Education Board and the Catholic Education Commission. The SPTC were the only parent body consulted although the Confederation for Advancement of State Education might be considered to be such. The Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) requested additional background information of SED to allow them to assess whether the consultation was to be wide-ranging and yet focused.

...the Scottish Consumer Council's major concern at this stage is that copies of the document and questionnaire are circulated widely enough among parents' organisations and representatives to allow for parental opinion at local as well as national level to be taken into consideration.

(Letter from P. Gibson, Director, to SED 30 April 1984)

The Department responded by providing the list of "contributing bodies" and indicating that, while copies of the paper and questionnaire had been issued to school councils,

...we did not make any specific arrangement whereby individual members of school councils, or indeed individual parent/teacher associations, would receive their own copies of the paper and questionnaire but we shall be pleased to supply such copies on request.

(SED letter, from J. C. Halley, 16 May 1984)

The letter went on to assure the SCC that responses would be considered "carefully" with a view to identifying "any common themes or suggestions" before arriving at conclusions on subsequent action. SED advice also

indicated that no particular weighting would apply to the responses but that,

... the views of school councils themselves will be of particular interest to the Secretary of State since they are perhaps uniquely placed to give an account of the difficulties and advantages of the present system. (*ibid.*)

There was, of course, little guarantee that the parental or any other voice might be heard, and the experience of school councils or the expertise and/or forcefulness of other interest groups might limit any parental response:

Consequently, it will, I fear, become evident that parental opinion is not as forcibly expressed as will be the opinion of other interest groups such as headteachers, the teaching profession and the education authorities.
(Chair of Stirling West School Council, individual response to Consultative exercise)

Also in May 1984, the SED issued a very limited 'corrections' paper to Annex A in the light of some of the comments made regarding its selectivity in relation to the original Glasgow University report. In the same month, Dr A Macbeth of the University issued an advice paper to interested parties - *School Councils: Reasons for Change*, which considered the limitations of Annex A and offered a rationale for those recommendations of the report which had been omitted by SED. The Macbeth advice paper also considered and contested the counter-arguments of those who wished to retain school councils as they were, viz

A school council for each school would be more expensive

The 16-18 consortia increase the argument for grouped school councils

A secondary school plus associated primaries is a good compromise arrangement

We had difficulties getting people to stand for election. If the number of school councils is increased there won't be enough people to go round

If there is a school council for each school you don't need a PTA

Grouped school councils enable contact between denominations and between special and other schools.

(School Councils: Reasons for Change, Dr A Macbeth, 14.5.84)

This was not acceptable to all, particularly to suggestions that schools could take on some of the servicing functions,

The writer should realise that one gets what one pays for these days. Schools are not gigantic sponges which can be expected to soak up more and more demands without proper resources being made available. (Milne's HS Headteacher: individual response to consultative exercise)

Advice and discussion papers were also issued by bodies such as the SCC and the Strathclyde School Council Parents' Federation whose paper (*Comments on Consultative Paper by SED*) supported the recommendations of the GU report and deplored the fact that those contained in Annex A were not all embracing and just lifted as abbreviated recommendations by the SED from the report summary with no attempt to suggest why such recommendations were made. The Federation's paper was an attempt to fill that gap; major concerns were about omissions or lack of explanation for members of school councils who might not have

read the original Report. The Federation advised that school councils had failed, posed the question "why one council per school?", and itemised seven arguments in favour of such an approach; these were:

- concentrating on parent interest in own child/own school;
- same for teachers;
- management and supervision appropriate at school level;
- only 66% of school council business related to individual schools;
- school council size at present too impersonal;
- representation a misnomer;
- quality of home-school liaison and ethos of the individual were arguments for an individual school council.

They endorsed the 'Principal-in-Council' concept, considering such leadership as essential, and suggested it could be enhanced by having an informed body of opinion available as an additional management tool; coordinating role/encouraging involvement by all interested parties in life and work of school. On the matter of Executive Powers they advised that the consultative paper listed in Annex A only the FIRST 7 of 11 suggested powers, so they quote the remainder (cf GU Report pp.107-108). They offered some comments on accountability, explaining what is meant as this was not done by SED. On School Council membership: home and school staff members were not defined by Annex A; the Federation paper recommended a higher figure than the GU Report, and suggested that elected members should have constant electoral accountability and be non-party political. Additional observations followed on frequency of meetings: a minimum of six was suggested; and comments were forthcoming on the idea of Area Councils; Servicing and Costs; Changes

in the Law. They suggested that local experiments might prove useful and were allowed by current legal framework.

The SCC's discussion paper concentrated on Structure, Membership, Functions, and Links with the EA and community. The paper sought a successful partnership between parents and teachers and regarded school councils as a vehicle for meaningful parental involvement. Ways of allowing parents on school councils a genuinely representative role were called for and consideration was given to ways of reporting back to parents. The SPTC had produced a pamphlet on the consultative paper which emphasised the essential training dimension for parents if they were to debate educational issues in an equal partnership with teachers, plus the need to have access to educational information on a wider basis than just individual schools. SPTC also recommended clearer language in national reports to allow lay persons greater access to the related thinking and justifications for particular educational decision-making.

It is difficult to judge how influential such papers were other than to determine the extent to which the views expressed in the papers is reflected in the questionnaire responses, but when faced with the consultation papers one council described their reaction;

...the response of members revealed deep feelings of annoyance, lack of influence and frustration with council's existing roles... (Wishaw and Shotts Schools Council)

While another advised,

Although we have given serious thought to the various papers published and have tried to give constructive answers one

cannot disguise the cynicism which exists in relation to these School Councils - only today I have been advised of a Parent representative asking to be replaced as she regards them as 'pointless and a waste of time'.

(Granton Grammar School Council)

The questionnaire responses from school councils suggest that the Strathclyde School Council Parents' Federation's paper was fairly influential.

While such advice papers indicate the degree of interest in providing viewpoints and information to those being approached in the consultative process, additional action by those involved illustrated the serious attitudes to the process being adopted. Strathclyde Region, for example, held a Seminar on 16th October 1984 involving elected members, senior officials of the Education Department and representatives of the SCC, the Strathclyde Schools (*sic*) Council Parents Federation and the SPTC. Participants were addressed by one of the authors of the 1980 Report. In the east of the country there were examples of widespread consultation prior to completion of the SED questionnaire - the Dunfermline Area School Council held a public meeting and circulated a questionnaire to every parent and teacher in their area of jurisdiction "seeking views on matters of organisation and function". Such was the interest generated by this approach that almost 5,000 questionnaires had to be analysed. In their official response to the SED, this school council not only completed the questionnaire, but also offered an overview of their suggestions and provided data from their own survey of opinion. This suggests that respondents did not feel obligated in only responding within the official framework and points towards some of the difficulties experienced with the SED consultative device.

Concern was also expressed regarding the timeframe and the perceived inadequacy of the overall SED approach.

I feel that this whole issue has been most shabbily treated by your Department from start to finish. After arranging a special meeting to discuss the initial proposals we are now receiving additional information and views from many groups which would have been very useful in our discussions ... I hope that this questionnaire and others which are returned to you will not be treated in the same apathetic manner as this whole issue has been treated to date.

(Bathgate Academy School Council response accompanying Annex B questionnaire return)

Certainly the questionnaire(s) received a great deal of criticism. Some respondents felt the questionnaire was 'loaded', too simplistic in design, contained 'leading' questions, ambiguities, omissions and inconsistencies;

It is considered that the questionnaire has been poorly worded and difficult to answer in view of the uncertainty of proposals. The need for an addendum to be printed to correct wording in the consultative paper issued by the Scottish Education Department is not looked upon favourably.
(North Irvine School Council)

We feel this questionnaire to be obscure and difficult to complete - many questions appear ambiguous.
(Craigdhu PTA Milngavie)

Kirkcaldy School Council for example felt the structure and content of the questionnaire limited the form of response, similar opinion was held by other councils too. To select two of many examples:

We found it difficult to relate our discussions to the terms of the questionnaire as annexe A and annexe B do not seem to tie up as they should, YES/NO answers seem a bit too brief.
(Prestonpans)

The Council had considerable difficulty in understanding some of the questions and in deciding what answers were required.
(Kinross)

Several respondents decided not to complete the questionnaire but to submit an alternative response:

I felt that it was better to do so by means of a written report as the questionnaire (Annex B) does not constitute a suitable format for the expression of these views.
(Lochaber High School Council: Headteacher response)

One of the co-authors of the Glasgow University Report, Dr A Macbeth, wrote to the SED on 31st December 1984 indicating that any questionnaire analysis following the consultative process "would be open to doubt in view of the inappropriate nature of the questionnaire itself". Macbeth then offers a comprehensive critique of the questionnaire highlighting some of its perceived inadequacies. He suggested the lack of concern about the range of possible purposes for school councils was too restrictive concentrating as it did only on improved home-school liaison and effective links between the authority and the community.

From a design perspective the questionnaire is sadly lacking. It is far from comprehensive, identifying only two potential purposes for school councils, and while three functions are listed, accountability is omitted. The possibility of two-tier structures is not included yet many respondents

made a significant comment about the need for area councils in conjunction with one council per school as their preferred option. The possibility of the headteacher being a member of the council is not listed in the options and one may surmise that if someone is omitted, not everyone will behave in a 'write-in' fashion! Some respondents abandoned the questionnaire in its entirety and provided alternative responses, while others attempted to make the most of a difficult task, including providing responses offering a range of votes and alternative answers provided by members at meetings designed to discuss the issues raised in the consultative process.

7.3 Analysis of responses to the consultative exercise

The design of the questionnaire(s), the omissions leading to possible distortion and the lack of dependable testing of public opinion about the GU Report make analysis difficult. I read and categorised sources and contents of responses to the questionnaires and alternative replies with a view to determining the concerns and opinions of respondents. The analysis searches for indicators of the opinion of those canvassed and who took the trouble to respond with the caveat that groups of people and organisations were consulted not individuals. Questions of who engineered any emphasis or weighting in any given response remain, as noted on p.176.

The main themes alluded to by respondents to the SED exercise and of research associated interest were recorded in the analysis against the list of associated concepts below:

Accountability

Bureaucracy

Composition of School Councils

Democracy/ elections

Functions of School Councils

History of School Councils

Home/School liaison

Leadership

Management/administration

Organisation of School Councils

Participation

Partnership

Professionalism

Purposes

Representation

Resourcing School Councils

Roles

School/Community

Stakeholders

Structures of School Councils.

I summarised the entire response to the SED Consultative exercise and statistical information is offered while consideration is given to the scope and nature of responses per category. The thrust of the analysis was consideration of the written comments but the methodological process and database adopted allowed some limited statistical data to be recorded. All the replies and some associated documentation were read and categorised as indicated in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Returns made in consultative exercise by category

Papers analysed	Nos.	%
Advice documents	2	0.50%
School Council responses	271	66.90%
Professional Association responses	8	2.00%
National/regional educational organisation	9	2.20%
PTA or other local/school based organisation	31	7.70%
EA responses	10	2.50%
Individual responses	44	10.90%
HT responses	5	1.20%
Other Bodies responses	17	4.20%
Correspondence with SED	1	0.20%
Press releases	2	0.50%
University/College of Education responses	4	1.00%
School staff response	1	0.20%
TOTAL	405	100.00%

These figures are consistent (albeit with minor differences of categorisation) with those reported by Macbeth (TESS, 15.3.85) in his article offering an analysis of the responses.

- **Response from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities:**

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) regarded the Annex questionnaire as inappropriate to complete suggesting this was a matter for individual authorities. A covering letter was forwarded giving a minimalist approach which reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of parental participation in the school council system, and indicated they regarded school councils as important forums for discussion whose structure, membership, functions and organisation should mirror the diverse Scottish scene.

- **Responses from Education Authorities:**

The questionnaire forwarded to local authorities included a number of questions requesting factual information on the format and costs of school councils. Costs were not consistently annotated and ranged from £124,300 (salary £ 86,700; accommodation £32,050; other costs £4950; members' expenses £600) for one Authority to £1650 (photocopying paper £400; Postage and stationery £420; Travel £830) for another.

Ten responses from Education Authorities were analysed (2.5% of the total papers) and there were indications of discontent with the basis of the consultative process:

The Paper is disappointing in its brevity and lack of depth and its reliance on a number of the recommendations from the 1980 Report by Glasgow University Research Team.
(Fife Regional Council)

Seven Authorities were in favour of the school council being based on a secondary school and its 'feeder' or associated primary schools.

...it was agreed that representations be made to the Secretary of State for Scotland, that the Authority be allowed to continue to develop its model of School Councils on the footing of each School Council being based on the relative Secondary School and its associated Primary Schools with a continuing review of functions and membership. It would ask you, therefore, to put this representation in the strongest possible terms before the Secretary of State. (Tayside Region)

The Regional Council are totally opposed to the recommendation that there should be one School Council for each school. (Central Regional Council)

Central Regional Council was unequivocal in its opposition to the idea of change

... suggestions as to change of our Educational system which are totally contrary to our traditions: and the unsubstantiated inference that alien practices are vaguely superior must be firmly rejected.

and affirmed its view of the prevailing orthodoxy with respect to representation, responsibility and authority,

The Regional Council is not in support of an alternative system whereby ad hoc groups of parents would take decisions affecting the educational provision for the children of other parents and be accorded authority over professional staff... authority should be confined ultimately to the elected representatives of the people in conformity with long, established democratic principles and practices in Scotland and the UK.

Notions of increased accountability, local participation or partnership with parents in the management of schools through School Councils appear remote in such responses. It is interesting to review the views on functions of school councils; the returns indicate the range and diversity of viewpoint among the Authorities:-

a. Advisory functions discharged by school councils for one authority meant advice on broad authority-wide policies, local community matters concerned another authority (eg relations between school and community, community education and the siting of new school buildings) while a third put emphasis on more detailed issues such as school transport, school crossing patrols, holiday dates and the naming of schools. Catchment zones and links with parents appeared quite frequently, but otherwise diversity precluded any common pattern. Some of the specific functions

cited were included by other EAs as management functions.

b. Management functions indicated included: allocation of casual holidays; sensitive or controversial matters affecting the provision of transport of pupils; applications for letting of school premises where sensitive or controversial; school attendance; exemption; enforcement of employment of children bye-laws ; encouraging appointment of school chaplains; encouraging development of good school/parent relationships by fostering information and development of parent/teacher associations or other appropriate means; identification of needs for and encouragement of non-vocational further education; encouraging use of schools for community education; identification of needs and support of claims from the Housing Authority for the housing of teachers; letting of school premises; use of community facilities.

There was no consensus nationally. One council (Grange SC) suggested that "the functions of restructured Councils be incorporated in National Legislation."

Diversity, flexibility and sensitivity to local circumstances can be important attributes for any system and may not be achievable with one model being promoted throughout the country. When requested to offer proposals for changing the present organisation or functions of school councils, the EAs were reluctant to suggest any although some did indicate that review was imminent or had been delayed pending the outcome of national discussions.

Some school councils doubted authorities' support, one noting:

... how jealously the Regional councillors guard that power over education and, therefore, are most reluctant to consult the existing School's Council mechanisms on educational policy. Consequently, we are effectively confined to truancy, footwear, clothing and school meal grants, and lets of premises.
(School Council Chairman, personal response)

- **Analysis of responses from school councils:**

Almost 67% (271) of the papers analysed were returns from school councils. Of these, 259 responses were via questionnaire completion or semi-completion, while the others were via an alternative response, usually a letter. Only 29% of these (79) indicated support for an alternative basis of relationship to schools to that which they currently enjoyed with 16% (43) of the questionnaire returns favouring a school council per school, but this is not surprising as they would be suggesting their own abolition in favour of some alternative structure. Unprompted by the questionnaire, 22 replies or 8% offered support for a two-tier structure or school-based council plus area meetings and one suggestion included the notion of a School Council Federation.

While there was evidence that the information documents (cf p.177) had been considered by councils or that they were content with current functions as outlined in accompanying Regionally devised constitutions, there was little consensus on the functions which school councils should have, for example, in relation to advisory functions the following were cited by some sample respondents: aspects of the curriculum, discipline, homework, staffing, siting of new schools, travel and road safety, careers and links with industry, health and sex education and the monitoring of school performance - in addition to the commonly established issues of truancy, catchment zones and home-school-community relations.

There was a consistent plea for more responsibility in the returns,

We want more responsibility for all such functions. The Council encompasses many skills and talents - all of which would be invaluable in the life of the schools.

(Linksfield Academy School Council)

The role of schools councils at the moment seems to be one of mediator between the authority and the community rather than a vehicle for communicating community opinion about education through school councils. With more executive powers in certain areas school councils could promote themselves from a talking shop image into a more effective body... (Leith Academy SC)

Despite such pleas there were instances of caution in taking up managerial functions:

In certain areas we would see inherent dangers in widening the managerial and executive scope of the schools council, especially if this could allow any unrepresentative lobby to gain undue control.

(Northmavine SC)

... the new proposals form too radical a change for which neither teachers nor parents have the will. It would seem, again, that Education is being used as a vehicle for political capital ...

(Arran SC)

but opinion generally favoured more responsibility and decision-making despite no clear-cut desire emerging which indicated a willingness to 'manage';

This would increase the effectiveness of the schools council as a number of members consider that the Council has become a "talking shop" and is not allowed to make relevant decisions.
(Kirkintilloch Area No1 SC)

Many school councils believed that for change to have any chance of success it

...would depend on a real change of attitude on the part of the authority towards the role of Schools Council without which no tinkering with structure can improve the situation.
(East Kilbride (East) SC)

- **Analysis of responses from other interested parties**

The responses from other interested parties included returns from national bodies such as the STUC, from individuals and headteachers, from educational organisations and from parental organisations (cf Table 7.1 on p.185). Some illustration of views may be helpful:

Responses from PTA or other local/ school-based organisation

Of the 29 PAs or PTAs who responded, 24 completed the Annex B questionnaire. Six were supportive of a two-tier structure approach and the vast majority favoured a school council based on a secondary school and feeder primaries. With respect to the functions of the council there was a general consensus that an advisory approach would be appropriate but no clear view on the areas to which this would relate. For example one response suggested under Advisory:

any matter considered by EA, HT or SC worthy of discussion
to take on all views before implementation

while another even suggested,

curriculum policy; subjects taught; school expenditure and budgets; buildings and materials; travel; road safety.

Proposals were usually more modest, such as,

communicate feelings of parents on curriculum; discipline; teaching standards; report back to parents via newsletter.

The managerial functions were similarly treated:

Managerial: individual disciplinary matters of more serious nature including attendance and truancy; raising and using school funds; school publicity information; use of buildings by community groups;

and

Management: appointment of HT and staff; school-community liaison; lets; buildings.

Policy concerns included,

school rules; nature of Home/School links; PR; setting up PAs/ PTAs;

or

Policy making: with agreement of HT - lets; attendance and exemption; oversight of young person employment; Health & Safety at School and at work; Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme; road safety; Home/School relationships; encourage parental interest.

Responses from Other Bodies

These included responses made by the SCC which believed school councils should have greater managerial and policy making functions plus important advisory functions particularly on a school's policies on home-

school liaison. The CBI admitted limited involvement but considered there was a need for school councils to assist in the dialogue between providers and users of the service; this to include local employers who should be encouraged to be involved. They remarked that anecdotal evidence suggested that school councils are powerless to influence local interests and while perhaps a useful sounding board, there is a high measure of frustration and low motivation to become involved. Their advice was that

...to ensure the full involvement of all parties including employers the Councils require to be able to exercise independent and meaningful powers over their local educational conditions albeit to a well defined, fully consulted and agreed constitution and within local and national educational frameworks.

The Church of Scotland (which accepted school councils as having a significant place in the organisation of the school) were strongly opposed to them having executive powers with regard to religious and moral education, to discipline or to the content of the curriculum. They wished functions to be largely advisory so that school staff would not be undermined and held the view that one council per school was not practicable everywhere.

Responses from Headteachers

There were five responses in this category, many perhaps content with their local or national associations response. One was unequivocal

I reject completely the current misguided philosophy that enthusiastic volunteers and schools themselves will soak up extra work and expense from existing resources.

Another advised,

... I discussed with School Councils a variety of specific topics, which they might wish to have within their remit... all were agreed that the present remit, which allows a School Council to consider anything connected with any of the schools, except the professional competence of an individual teacher, was wide enough to allow them the freedom of action that they would wish.

Responses from Professional Associations

The EIS formal response suggested that

... parents are more concerned with having good channels of communication with schools than with participating actively in the work of statutory or even voluntary bodies associated with the schools

and offered clear guidance,

It is inappropriate for non-professionals to be involved at the point where a school is responding to national curricular guidelines and is deciding what courses it should offer within the limitations of its staffing and other resources. Decisions on formal curricular matters are the core of the autonomy of the school staff and any decision on sharing them with others has serious implications for the educational system. However it is appropriate (and indeed desirable) that parents should express views on the curriculum of the schools attended by their children.

The principal objections of the Headteachers Association of Scotland were that proposals would to a large extent deprive Heads of the right to manage the school and to deprive him/her of the power to act quickly if

necessary. The Catholic Headteachers Association was pointed in its assessment of school councils: "School Councils as at present constituted couldn't improve anything."

Responses from national/regional organisations

Despite being a non-Scottish body, the National Association of Governors and Managers (NAGM) submitted that the headteacher should not be chairman of the council, a position best held by a good parent, and advised that if Home-School-Community links were not to be mainly the responsibility of the head and the school council there was little point in having councils.

The Scottish Community Education Council's return indicated that there had been a "lack of clarity about their purpose" but suggested that 3 had emerged:

- 2 way channel of communication between local community and distant decision-makers
- forum to stimulate parental interest in education so maximising the benefit of schooling for children
- a device to encourage liaison between nursery/primary and primary/secondary.

The General Teaching Council suggested limited executive powers for councils on issues such as liaison between school and community and finance raised "provided that such expenditure did not influence the curriculum in a way unacceptable to school staff". The GTC also said councils might have consultative powers in areas such as discipline, homework and home support with reading.

Diversity of returns and incomplete questionnaires make statistical analysis difficult. There appeared to be little consensus about the functions of revised school councils. Many replies sought area councils, to counter some of the negative aspects of a council per school, a notion which had strong support but not universal appeal. Many school councils sought greater powers and responsibilities but little consensus of what these might be was evident and there was little agreement about advisory, policy-making and managerial functions.

7.4 Interviewees' perspectives on school councils

There was a general consensus among those I interviewed that school councils "were largely ineffectual" (Munn) and had little to offer except continuing recognition "that there is a valid place for neighbourhood influence in school matters." (Macbeth)

Their main weaknesses were identified as:

- (i) the 'grouped' nature of councils ie. representing a number of schools based on a geographical area led to a lack of identity or profile for individual schools; (Macbeth; Fordyce; McNeill; Beveridge)
- (ii) large and unwieldy size of the councils; (Macbeth; Brodie; Smith; Steele)
- (iii) absence of real functions and plainly dealing with peripheral issues such as truancy; (Macbeth; MacBeath; Brodie)
- (iv) not dealing with central educational issues; (Macbeth)
- (v) distant and dominated by the local authority therefore not designed to encourage participation; (Dignan; Fordyce)
- (vi) parent views outweighed by the professionals; (McNeill; Smith; Steele)

- (vii) primary schools dominated by secondary school interests;
(Forrester)
- (viii) variation across the country of school council structure and remit;
(Beveridge; Brodie)
- (ix) inadequate local accountability to parents; (Beveridge).

The grouped nature of school councils meant that they "They were a little bit removed to parents" and were "perceived as agents of the Education Authority" (Fordyce). Fred Forrester suggested that "They were used by Education Authorities to give the semblance of consultation", and as one local authority official observed they were "not developed for genuine participation" (McIntyre). While interviewees had few accolades for councils, Brodie expressed admiration for the Lothian school councils which "were on almost a one School Council per school basis and where that model was applied, I think they were making some kind of contribution."

School council strengths identified were fewer:

- (i) Primary and secondary schools grouped together on an area basis which strengthened local democracy at the theoretical rather than necessarily at the practical level; (Munn; MacBeath; McIntyre)
- (ii) the grouped model for school councils allowed PTAs to flourish in schools whereas it is difficult for individual schools to accommodate boards and PTAs; (Gillespie)
- (iii) links between the secondary and the primary school were aided by school councils; (Gillespie)
- (iv) wider community involvement. (Steele)

MacBeath qualified his general support for such councils as strengthening local democracy by offering an anecdote concerning local politicians ensuring they retained power on the school council of which he was a member,

I still remember sitting in that first meeting with a bunch of strangers who had got together and no-one knew anyone else and the very first thing they did was to nominate Provost YY for the Chair. When I looked around the room, no-one knew who Provost YY was and he was immediately elected; so much for the notion of a local democracy.

MacBeath advised of a general dissatisfaction with school councils leading to expectations of reform. On specifics, Macbeth referred to the GU Report which recorded a division of opinion among SC members on professional/non-professional lines on the question of curricular influence:

For example, only 32% of headteachers favoured school council involvement in decisions about subjects to be taught, whereas 80% of parents favoured it; the figures for involvement in teaching methods were headteachers 23%, parents 69%. More parents wanted involvement in staff appointments than did teachers and headteachers (p. 43 of our report). The differences were statistically highly significant. On other matters the differences were less marked.

Fordyce suggested that some school council members "didn't want School Boards" (eg. chairpersons of councils) perhaps because they saw a reduction in their own personal power and influence. Forrester believed school councils were

... fairly weak bodies and anyone seriously interested in parent power would have concluded that they were weak bodies. I am

sure Michael Forsyth did... Education authorities just used them for their own purposes... They were not very well attended. Councillors were very frequently not in attendance, although they were supposed to be if the School Council was covering their wards or parts of their wards.

and as a result were ripe for reform. Forrester was in no doubt about who pushed for their reform,

There wasn't much steam behind the reform movement either. There was general apathy about the whole issue in 1988. I don't recall a lot of parents pressing for School Councils to be given more powers, etc. The general picture is one somewhere between apathy and satisfaction... The whole business came from the Centre. It was a Michael Forsyth, Scottish Office business with political motivation.

Forrester even dismissed the 1987 Tory Manifesto promise to reform school councils and concludes "The reform of School Councils wasn't a big issue on the ground". This was not the view of some on the ground as Steele advises:

School Councils could have been changed... they were a really bad thing because there could have been 60 people at our School Council. You can't even have a discussion with that number of people... Headteachers who attended were quite defensive against the view of parents.

7.5 Relationship to underlying concepts

While the questionnaire design requested views on composition, role and function of councils including management responsibilities, it did not include overt questions concerned with concepts such as accountability and professionalism; only a small number of documents analysed referred directly to such ideas. Of the 271 school council responses, 252

completed the questionnaire at least in part but provided little other comment. Again generalisation is not possible but some interesting illustration is.

The responses which mentioned the notion of **accountability** included two from Colleges of Education eg Moray House suggested,

The strengthening of the accountability of schools to school councils by means of a reporting system would also allow Councils to take an investigative rather than simply a responsive approach to the curriculum.

The Scottish Community Education Council believed "the realistic approach is one of accountability publicly to the school council for management rather than one of responsibility by the school council." and suggested the HT "be required to provide an Annual Report to school council on policies, buildings, staffing, curriculum etc." Of the others, Plockton HS SC stressed a monitoring role,

SCs should be able to ensure that teachers are functioning up to acceptable professional standards.

The Association of Primary Headteachers (Dundee Division) felt there was sufficient accountability, firstly to employers, then to GTC, Inspectorate, etc, and suggested another layer to school council would be additional bureaucracy.

On **professionalism**, of the nine responses concerned, Kildrum PS PA objected to the idea that persons other than professionals should influence or determine any matters relating to the curriculum and Carnoustie SC

believed "The professionals do their job well without any lay interference or guidance." On the other hand, Lossiemouth SC insisted the Head and teachers "must be prepared to work with a Council and be able to accept their involvement and not to put up barriers".

On **partnership**, Summerhill Academy SC recognised the difficulties because,

...traditionally, politicians, senior officials and staff are reluctant to relinquish or share power... But unless it happens the present School Council system will become progressively more ineffectual.

Chatelerhaut PS PA believed teachers and parents required to be educated in partnership thinking, because "us and them barriers exist". They proposed gentle persuasion to achieve this but realism might subsequently require "insistence on accountability". The SCC was concerned with equal membership and equal voting of home membership (pupils and parents) with school representatives (teachers, incl HTs) based on equal partnership. Not all regarded partnership as their predominant concern, Wick SC regarded itself "effective as a consumer watchdog which highlights particular problems", while the Black Isle Area SC affirmed "We are the consumers and should have more say."

On **democracy, participation and representation** an individual reply from an Ayrshire SC member suggested "The more democratic and supportive we are as a Council and Community the more we shall understand the many underlying problems." As noted on p.194, the national EIS response claimed parents were more interested in useful

channels of communication with schools than with active participation in such bodies associated with the schools. Concerns were expressed about interference in professional matters and about threats to "the core of the autonomy of the school staff".

The Presbytery of Glasgow's viewpoint was that the "main stakeholders should have equal representation having each a 50% share of vote". An individual response from a school AHT claimed that school councils were not sufficiently representative and there was no quality representation because interest was poor and membership came from a restricted range. COSLA's reply reaffirmed commitment to the principle of parental participation in the school council system and regarded the school council as important forums for discussion and suggested its structure, membership, functions and organisation should mirror the diverse Scottish scene. Hermitage Academy PTA wanted "greater involvement of parents in running of school" but believed the school council should have a purely advisory or consultative role with all major executive decisions remaining with the HT despite some teacher members feeling there should be an element of executive power invested in school councils.

The views about the success or failure of school councils were mixed, the preponderance of replies indicated degrees of dissatisfaction with role, function and responsibilities but perhaps not always to the extent of the Kirkintilloch SC summation:

One hundred per cent failure!!! A farce!!! Ten years wasted!!!
A sham for real parental/professional involvement.

No action was taken by government in relation to this consultative exercise partly, I suspect, because of the difficulties in deriving conclusions which would point the way forward, and possibly because of the protracted industrial action by teachers in the next few years. It was to be another four years before proposals came forward which would not reform councils but replace them with school boards which it was claimed would provide greater opportunities for parents; the received view was that school councils had failed.

School board proposals: the consultative exercise

This chapter reviews the period between 1984 and the emergence of Michael Forsyth as Education Minister in 1987.

Forsyth's proposals and the resulting consultative exercise responses are analysed and reported. General public reaction is chronicled too.

Proposals for school boards:the public response

8 The consultative exercise on school boards

8.1 Introduction

In 1986, proposed legislation envisaging greater powers for parents and school governors in England and Wales inevitably led to speculation that something might be done in Scotland, particularly as the 1984 consultation exercise on school councils had been left in abeyance by the Scottish Education Department. Generally it was agreed that change was necessary but there had been no clear consensus on the way ahead, and government reform of school councils (as distinct from local authority developments eg in Tayside and Lothian Regions) was left unaddressed while Scottish education experienced a period of unprecedented industrial action by school teachers culminating in the Secretary of State's response to the recommendations of the Main Report (1986) on teachers' pay and conditions of service. Of course any emphasis on awaiting consensus to emerge in order to inform action allows one to speculate on how government makes policy. Or were school councils so apolitical and devoid of authority and real function that the government was genuinely wishing to engender greater participation and a more meaningful role as a result of their reform?

8.2 1986, peace returns to Scottish schools

The Main Report endorsed the view of the 1984 SED exercise:

Although we understand that there was little consensus in the responses received by SED to their 1984 consultative exercise...
(4.15, p.46)

Main emphasised the role of management in schools, particularly at

headteacher level, and also the role of parents in the education of their children, the need for parental involvement in schooling especially in relation to reporting by teachers, and uniquely the committee sought views on teacher pay and conditions from parental organisations. In the light of such wide-ranging consultation, the Report specifically urged the government to consider school council reform which had been left "in limbo". (*ibid.*, 4.16, p.46)

Post-Main it is evident that the field of parental involvement in local schools (including representation on councils of participatory administration) had returned to the political agenda. The attempts by unions and the government to secure parental support for their respective standpoints during the industrial unrest succeeded in bringing the role of parents in education into sharper focus. A leading Scottish teacher union official responding to the proposed legislation in England opined:

... the whole concept of school governors seems quaint to Scottish teachers and parents.

while immediately recognising,

However, it is worth recalling that the present Government is the most centralist in recent history and that several significant recent developments in Scottish education have their origins south of the border.

and had concluded by suggesting:

.. that parents should form a "fourth estate" in education, alongside central government, the education authorities and the teachers... Those seeking power must gravitate towards where decisions are taken and this, for the time being at least, does not mean concentrating on school councils.

(TSES: Paths to Parent Power, Fred Forrester, p.2, 16.5.86)

Forrester's viewpoint, developed by the experience of the successful campaigning in the previous two years, indicated that local participation was of potentially less benefit to parent activists than some form of power or influence on the national stage where he claimed the key decisions are made. There is always scope for those committed and interested enough to pursue such a platform and related 'power', but not everyone is interested in 'power' nor might they be interested beyond their own local circumstances which are as yet still of prime importance to many individuals and parents. It can be argued that most parents are not interested in policy; their concerns relate to their children's experience of schooling and therefore the more central power and responsibility is given to parents the more it falls to a few committed campaigners or activists who may or may not be concerned for parental benefits. Such a clear bid to take parental interest away from local issues into broader campaigns about apportionment of national resources led to a quick response. Atherton of SCC replied to Forrester's attempt to stimulate the debate by taking issue:

... with Mr. Forrester's interesting claim that the main path to "parent power" lies not in attendance at meetings only in one school or through school councils. Parental effort, he suggests, should gravitate away from the periphery towards where the real decisions are made...

... Parents in Scotland have consistently repudiated any claims that they seek a commanding position in the educational system. What they do want is to be consulted about and genuinely participate in education decision-making, in partnership with the professionals.

(TSES: Power versus participation, Graham Atherton, p.2, 6.6.86)

Atherton raised the spectre of 'parent power' and its various meanings, and immediately rejected the notion of power as control or executive functions for parents. Echoes of the developing English school governor proposals can be found in this debate about the most important locus of parental involvement ie at local school level which might lead to a greater number of parents participating or at national level by representation on bodies such as curriculum councils or regional education committees with a commensurate substantial reduction of those who might be actively involved. Atherton was clear in his proposals for developing meaningful structures for parents;

If parents really are to constitute a fourth estate in education, they need local and national support structures to match the ones already at the disposal of the providers of educational services. This could be greatly enhanced by having for each school a member of staff with specialist responsibility for home-school liaison, an active parent-teacher or parents' association, and, at a more formal level, one "single school" school council with equal representation of parents and teachers, and with a stronger role in school management and policy-making.

These constitute the paving stones of parent participation - not "parent power" - in the provision of educational services. Once these have been properly laid down, only then will there be pathways to parent participation. (*op cit.*)

David Brodie, chairman of the Scottish Parent Teacher Council, writing in a personal capacity on *The need for an effective home-school partnership* which argued the case for a Parents' Council with remit to cover such areas as the curriculum and discipline (TSES, p2., 20.2.87) suggested:

The professionals may often know best, but they certainly don't know everything...

The debate about school councils and their revision or replacement had been revived.

8.3 Politicians and elections

Neil Munro, writing in the TSES, p.3 on 11.7.86 of an unbearably soporific atmosphere in the Commons when Scottish MPs allowed themselves the rare luxury of a debate on Scottish education in the Scottish Grand Committee, suggested that one emerging politician livened things up. That person was Michael Forsyth, a Conservative back-bench MP. The style and the viewpoint is there to see.

... making straight for every political jugular he could find while deploring others for their political point-scoring. The central problem in schools, he raged (as much at his own Government as anyone else), was lack of discipline, declining standards and pupils totally unequipped for life.

The reason... was that heads and parents did not have enough power: there was a need to "remove the dead hand of the producer lobbies and the trade unions". This was in notable contrast to the Education Minister's cheerful litany of achievement by a Government with "a record to be proud of".

... He regaled the committee with grim tales from the Labour gulag of the Inner London Education Authority where... kids are asked to compare Hitler's anti-union behaviour with the Government's legislation, to keep a sharp look-out for sexism, and to cut out pictures of naked women and stick men's heads on them.

In March 1987, a wide-ranging discussion pamphlet entitled *Scotland, the next five years* was published by the Scottish Conservative Party. The

section on Education (p.4) claimed that while the parents' charter was "an important and successful initiative", there remained "little meaningful participation in the management and governing of the schools themselves".

School councils, where they exist, are bodies with few if any powers, minimal parental activity and negligible impact on the life of the school. The corollary is that individual schools have little autonomy, no meaningful ability to determine the best use of resources spent in the school, and dependent for their viability on the education departments of local authorities.

The pamphlet recognised such problems were not unique to Scotland within the UK, but at least elsewhere governing bodies had "a long and successful tradition of involvement in schools with executive as well as advisory powers". The Conservatives wished to promote "real parent power in Scottish schools to be shared with the professional teacher". Their solution was for every school to have its own school council with executive powers which could influence resource allocation, generate additional money from the community, play a role in appointing heads, help maintain discipline and identify priorities. Concern was expressed about the "benevolent paternalism" pervading the Scottish psyche to the extent that our citizens were content to allow others to take responsibility and decisions. "Of course the business of teaching must be left to the professional teachers", the pamphlet added, but it clearly did not want the management of schools only to be the business of the professionals. It is evident that the Conservatives had a vision of the future which included a greater role for parents in school management on enhanced and more powerful school councils which might involve executive powers if they were to emulate English governing bodies.

Soon after this the election campaign of 1987 commenced and in the Scottish Conservative Party's Manifesto, the section *Raising Standards in our Schools* promised:

We will improve the management of schools, increase local autonomy and give parents and other local interests a more important role in the running of their schools. To achieve these ends we will initiate a major reform of school councils so that they will be equipped in co-operation with headmasters and teachers to assume advisory and executive responsibilities in the running of their schools...

John McKay who held the education portfolio at the Scottish Office affirmed the manifesto commitment:

... we need a partnership to bring the two groups closer together... some teachers might regard this as interference, but more parental involvement and support for teachers does not mean allowing parents into areas that hitherto have been the sacred preserve of the professionals. Teachers have just got to bite that bullet.

(TSES: McKay splits with England, p.1, 29.5.87)

Some commentators saw the promise of a school council for each school as a move to reduce education authority power but McKay likened it to loosening "the umbilical cord which ties a school to its education authority" while supporting teachers at the local level by encouraging greater parental support particularly in relation to school discipline. The election returned the Conservatives to power in the UK, but there were Scottish casualties most notably John McKay. A replacement Education Minister had to be found from a decreasing number of Tory MPs both eligible and capable of ministerial office. In the aftermath of the election, the Education

portfolio was given to the *enfant terrible* and 'Thatcherite MP', Michael Forsyth. The professional associations' worries and concerns were immediately voiced. John Pollock, secretary of the EIS, said:

I hope Mr Forsyth's former hostility to those working within the Scottish education sector will be moderated by the immense public support for Scottish education.

While Alex Stanley of the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association (SSTA) echoed:

People getting Government office often mature quickly, and we must hope that that happens in this instance.

(TSES: Minister may mature, p.1, 19.6.87)

A week later, and after the Queen's Speech introducing "opting out" for schools in England and Wales, the Editor of the Times Scotland Education Supplement, Willis Pickard wrote

... legislation to parallel that announced for England and Wales in the Queen's Speech yesterday would run into political problems. At present there is no mechanism in Scotland by which schools could choose "independence" of their controlling local authority because there is no grouping of parents which could make such a decision. In England, there are school governors with strong parent representation...

...Creating more school councils would inevitably be seen by the Labour Party as opening the door for future "opting out" on the Baker model. With 50 MPs to the Conservatives' 10, they would bitterly oppose any initiative from the Secretary of State and Mr Michael Forsyth, his Education Minister...

The received wisdom was that no legislation would be possible nor supportable given the government's lack of Scottish backing. The dangers of importing the new English proposals were as a result negligible and a novice Minister, no matter his ideological pedigree nor combative style, could not possibly take on the bastion of the Scottish educational establishment. Unabashed, Forsyth, when elaborating on the Queen's speech, indicated:

We intend parents and local people to be able to play an increasing part in the management of their children's schools, working with headteachers and staff until school councils grow into a thriving system of local management.

(TSES: Forsyth: Labour will wait and see, p. 1, 3.7.87)

This would indicate an evolutionary process for school councils. Yet only a month later the publication of *School Management and the Role of Parents: Consultation Paper* (Scottish Education Department, 1987) initiated an unprecedented furore, debate and response to the Scottish Office. What had Forsyth proposed?

8.4 The Government's proposals

The government's exercise to assess the public response was initiated by the Consultation Paper (SED, 1987) mentioned above and culminated in the issue of the paper *School Management: the Government's Conclusions* (Scottish Office, 1988) in January 1988. The initial proposals were contained in ten paragraphs plus an annex which amplified the proposals in greater detail; the introduction re-affirmed the parental position in law with regard to education, confirmed the Government's belief that as far as possible local decisions be taken at local level, and indicated the need for a radical new approach to replace school councils.

The main thrust of the proposals may be summarised as:

- the provision of a forum for expression of parental interests
- a role for parents in the management of schools
- an enhanced accountability of school professionals and education authorities
- the establishment of school boards with initial minimum powers ("floor" powers) and functions, but with scope to take on greater responsibilities ("ceiling" powers)
- such boards to have elected representatives from parents and staff; to have a parental majority and co-opted members from the local community
- initial formal constitutions to be prepared by education authorities subject to change via petition by boards once elected
- the Secretary of State retained the general right to determine additional powers for boards to maintain their development
- training would be provided for members and education authorities would require to establish adequate financial information systems to give boards.

How radical were the government's Scottish proposals? The proposals postulated the establishment of school boards to supercede school councils in the publicly maintained sector of Scottish education; no reform, but 'root and branch' replacement. In contrast to the revised governors in England and Wales, the Scottish proposals embraced a parental voting majority whereas membership of school governing bodies was to be reformed so that no single interest would predominate. The Scottish emphasis was ostensibly on an enhanced role for parents.

The Government's objective is to provide a framework which will give parents an established forum for expression of their interests. (para. 4)

A leaflet summarising the proposals was sent to every school to permit all teachers and parents to receive a copy and to encourage responses. The proposed boards were to provide parents and local community members (para. 8) with the opportunity for active participation in the management of schools, and to allow parents an increased say in the schooling of their children. Teachers and local authorities were to be more accountable and responsive to parents and the community by providing a range of information not hitherto readily available. The phrase "local community" was further qualified in the Annex to the document where the representation of this kind was indicated as being "representatives from the local business community and Church representatives" (Annex, para. 2.4). This illustrates both acceptance of the notion of "stakeholders" discussed in Chapter 3 and developing notions of education-business partnership and enterprise education in Scottish schools supported to an extent by the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) (Stronach and Morris, 1994).

While the initial responsibilities of such boards were to be limited, there would be scope to take on further "ceiling powers" over the school budget for example, when individual boards or the Secretary of State decided this would be appropriate. This increase in the government's powers which would allow it to force the pace of board's development was roundly condemned as an attack on local autonomy and on the role of EAs. The issue of such "ceiling powers" appeared to be the most contentious, and

the proposals attracted wide public interest and debate in the press and media generally.

8.5 Reaction to the proposals and the consultation period

The initial reaction to the consultative paper was consternation at best, and disbelief that the government, despite the electoral result in Scotland combined with the resulting potential difficulties in running Scottish committees at Westminster, was still determined to put forward its proposals no matter how radical or unexpected. Did the government in Scotland believe that having sustained such a defeat, there was little left to lose? Press commentaries suggested this might be the case. Forsyth cannot be described as someone who avoided argument and he was a politician who revelled in seizing the initiative, so was it his influence or was there backing from the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher, that such legislation was necessary to enable 'opting out' within Scotland, which precipitated such controversial proposals?

The concerns according to Forrester, speaking for the EIS, were significant, viz rule by parent consumers (who were not the only consumers of education); "rule by a small and not necessarily representative coterie of parents rather than rule by professionals who are answerable to an elected education authority". Forrester concluded this would be a retrograde step with respect to educational reform of the curriculum because he claimed parents tended to be traditionalist and conservative.

Already at this very early stage, the main themes of the responses to the consultative exercise were emerging or were being hastily forged in response to Forsyth's audacious initiative, eg concerns about

unrepresentative minorities with traditional or uninformed or dangerously radical views taking over boards and thus schools. Parents were not seeking such powers and were ill-equipped to take them on. From the media reports throughout the time of the consultative exercise, an observer might postulate that the most important issues of concern related to:

- the composition of boards,
- their powers and capacities including rights of veto on appointments,
- unequal teacher representation despite the rhetoric of partnership,
- 'unrepresentative elected parents' by which was meant that untypical parents might be elected,
- non-professionals 'interfering' in professional areas particularly the curriculum and assessment,
- and a down-grading of the headteacher role.

The reaction and interest was unprecedented, not least because of the limited time-span for consultation. Forsyth imposed a very tight seven week deadline for consultation on the proposals. Cynics might interpret this as yet another 'sham' exercise in democracy noting that such consultative comments received were rarely influential, while political pressure, on the other hand a much more potent influence, might be prevented from gaining momentum in such a short period. Given that the GU Report on school councils had been published in 1980, and that there had been a studied silence for three years after the 1984 consultative exercise, the apparent rush with these proposals was regarded as sinister and this stimulated resistance to many suggestions which might ordinarily have been acceptable.

Forsyth announced that the deadline for submissions on the boards had been extended to November 3 because of the "overwhelming interest" shown in the proposals. The Scottish Education Department was getting requests for more than 1,000 copies of the full consultation document every day, but parent expectations and ambitions remained unclear.

8.6 Interviewee reaction to the school board proposals

Some interviewees for the present study confirmed that the reaction to Forsyth's initial proposals was extreme. Hill, who went on to found the Scottish School Boards Association (SSBA) "was absolutely dead set against it" and held the view that "this was just an intrusion, and the parents had no business inside the school gate." This was not an unusual initial response. The proposals were regarded as too radical and so alien to Scottish education that they threatened its very fabric; "Civilisation as we know it was to end" (Munn), and McNeill signalled,

Joe Public, out there, for whatever reason, was very unhappy about any suggestion that they should start exercising real power over schools and over the management of schools.

Brodie suggested that Forsyth, being a PR professional, set out to shock with the initial proposals for floor and ceiling powers so that aspects of the suggestions might prove more acceptable. The principal concerns identified related directly to the "floor and ceiling powers" (Macbeth) and the proposed powers of the Secretary of State to force the development of boards rather than allowing the "consensual evolution of Boards" (McIntyre) and the possibility of 'unrepresentative' parents taking control of schools from the professionals, but generally as MacBeath noted there existed a general lack of enthusiasm combined with great suspicion

because boards

...were introduced by a Government in Scotland which was unpopular and by someone who was not a highly popular figure in Scotland either.

The particular role played by the new Minister, Michael Forsyth, and why, was corroborated and stressed by several 'witnesses'; Fordyce saw Forsyth as instrumental but with "a personal angle" and agenda to make his mark. The new Minister was viewed as someone with the necessary PR skills and the ambition in circumstances in which he had little to lose and everything to gain. Forsyth's undoubted energy and ability were combined to make things happen and to effect change. Munn interpreted Forsyth's agenda in a similar fashion,

Forsyth has radical right wing credentials. Here is his first bite at ministerial office. He wants to make things happen. He wants to get noticed so there is a whole political career being carved out there as well as whether it might do any good for education or not, and he was jockeying for position inside the Scottish Office and able to say to Mrs. Thatcher, "I am the only Thatcherite you have got in the Scottish Office".

and goes on to suggest,

While there is no evidence to suggest that, until he arrived, anyone had thought of School Boards. There was possibly some template somewhere or some framework for a revised School Council but they had sat on that for almost four years.

Being aware of developments in England and espousing the 'Thatcherite' approach, Forsyth seized the opportunity to decide that a more potent

version of participative councils congruent with developments in England and designed as a necessary prelude to grant maintained schools might result in his being noticed at UK national level.

Brodie never doubted the strength and determination nor the ambition of such an able and astute politician.

Forsyth... had tremendous energy, tremendous ability to deliver and a capacity to just tell the Civil Servants to get on with it...in St. Andrew's House... he brought a degree of action-related activity into that place that they just didn't understand because they had no previous experience of it... his whole strategy was to get the School Boards established first of all broadly in the way in which they were enacted, and then subsequently to... produce further legislation for opting out...

Other observers too had strong views on the approach of Forsyth, which is described by McIntyre as "combative and very confrontational ". Beveridge as an HMCI would have come into close contact with the new Minister and he indicated that Forsyth was

quite determined to shake things up in education... a very dynamic Minister, who made his points very forcibly.

Brodie believed that the initial proposals containing the contentious 'floor and ceiling powers' were intended to shock "in order that a slightly watered down version become accepted in due course". His verdict on Forsyth is interesting, he believed

...that the Forsyth experience did the involvement of parents in Scottish education the world of good.

Of course it might not be simply about the Forsyth phenomenon. McNeill suggested the proposals generated

...an irrationally strong reaction. From the public, there was almost a feeling of 'This is what they did in England being translated into Scotland and we don't really want it...'

There were clearly worries about 'anglicisation' as evinced in the educational press of the time and concerns about 'opting-out' might be fairly described to have hijacked the school board proposals. HMI understatement is evident when compared with other views of the initial furore:

Our first impressions within the Department were that there was considerable antipathy to School Boards across the country, not just within education but also within parents. There was quite a feeling, we believed, that professionals saw this as an encroachment... The parents felt that the teachers did very well and what could they 'teach' teachers?
(Beveridge)

Forrester, Depute Secretary of the EIS, emphasised the sense of a campaign developing against the proposals, led by parent activist groups involving people such as Judith Gillespie, and juxtaposed school boards with 'opting-out' which similarly did not receive parental support. He was coy about the Union role in opposing the board proposals; not so MacBeath, who clearly believed the teaching Unions "were very much against Boards", while without the benefit of hard evidence opines that the majority of teachers were antagonistic and perceived boards as threatening professional autonomy.

The concerns about unrepresentative or militant and interfering parents were highlighted but Beveridge indicated much of this was groundless particularly for headteachers,

They feared ending up powerless, continually going back to the School Board for decisions about things and this, I believe, in almost all cases, was completely unfounded.

MacBeath's study of the early years of boards also supports this view that despite the initial concerns and alarums, "in the great majority of Boards, the fears and suspicions were groundless". Even Forrester admitted "they have dropped out of the public mind" and that this "has turned out to be not a world-shattering reform at all."

8.7 Events during the consultative exercise

The educational press revelled in the debate about the school board proposals. Platforms were provided for 'key' individuals to proffer their views and once the responses began to be published further good copy became available.

Forsyth, confirming his affinity for belligerence, but unusually for a consultative exercise, took exception during the consultative period to aspects of the published EIS national response in relation to their interpretation of the proposals viz questions about a board's accountability. He stated:

First, parent members of the boards will be elected by the other parents. Second, parents will not be alone on the boards - there will be representatives of other community interests and, importantly, teacher members chosen by their colleagues.

He stressed that the alternative proposals put forward by the EIS, in their response to the consultative exercise, were congruent with the "floor powers" proposed. The minister maintained the EIS now accepted that there should be one body for each school, that it should have a right to be consulted on any matter it chose, and that boards should be involved in the appointment of senior staff. The only "floor" proposals the EIS did not like were the controls over *per capita* spending and the veto on appointing headteachers; as the consultative period went on Forsyth's refrain became that only in the rarest of cases would a board be expected to reject a teacher, and that in normal circumstances boards would have only one executive power - control over a small amount of *per capita* spending, which in all likelihood would be returned to the headteacher's jurisdiction anyway. This was either a form of retreat from the original proposals or a stout defence of them in the face of entrenched if not hysterical opposition fuelled by public meetings of parents usually held in schools providing a platform for the possibility of 'alarmist' views to be expressed by officials and professionals, petitions, the activities of various action groups and the popular press. Daly and Gillespie co-ordinated campaigns ostensibly designed to share the consultative responses conducting independent surveys of parental opinion in Lothian and Grampian Regions, with input from Highland, Orkney and Shetland, and offering advice and draft responses for completion. They also publicised widely the 'flavour and range' of replies being formulated and forwarded to the Scottish Office in response to the consultation request. Collected comments range from "Strongly in favour as the present school council system is totally inadequate" to "the proposals are not about education, they are political and likely to encourage division and inequality". The majority fall somewhere in between:

"Being handed a leaflet does not merit the description of being a consultation". "Having read the pamphlet I feel that we need somebody in authority to discuss the subject"... "I'm suspicious of the haste".

"I welcome parental involvement on a consultative basis, but no one group should have a majority"... "Let the professionals do their job"... "No school board should have ceiling powers".

"A parent's interest in a particular school may be intense but it is transitory". "There's no provision for accountability of parent members of school boards"...

(TSES: letter, What parents are saying, p.4, 2.10.87)

Forsyth's response to such publicly available comment was repeatedly to assure the public that the talk of ulterior motives was mistaken and that the "ceiling" powers for boards were merely a reserve position to be used only in the event of local authorities being so recalcitrant that they refused to concede the areas of consultations provided for in the "floor" powers. This was necessary he insisted to avoid boards proving as powerless as school councils, whose inadequacy was the starting point for the thread of argument running through the consultation paper and his proposals.

Clearly, despite his best efforts in defence of the proposition, there was support for greater participation of parents but not management. Yet Forsyth was unwilling or unable to concede that he may have misread the signals regarding parental wishes. A prominent member of his own party, Mr Alick Buchanan-Smith, the Kincardine and Deeside MP who had refused government office to be free to criticise policy, attacked the Government's misconceived education policies; his response to the consultative exercise (28.10.87) emphasised that these were his personal views which he was making public not to embarrass the minister or Scottish Office, but because they reflected the majority of submissions

received by him as MP. He argued on the strength of the 1987 Election Manifesto and the Queen's Speech which had indicated that progress was to be achieved by reforming and improving school councils. He was equally suspicious of the timescale:

...generally it has left a suspicion that the Scottish Office is seeking to jump conclusions on the school system. As a consequence, attention has been directed to the more extreme elements of the proposals and a situation has been created where much that is good in the proposals is put at risk because it has been so overshadowed by what is unattractive and extreme. This... could have been avoided.

Buchanan-Smith offered an alternative revision of school councils and ended his comments on the proposals for boards by stating:

...The management structure is unsound and ill conceived. There will, in effect, be three groups of management: education authority, headteacher, and board. This makes little sense in effective management terms.
...I have found no general desire amongst parents to be involved in matters which they regard as of a professional nature such as curriculum... and direct management functions such as appointment of staff and finance. To have full rights to be consulted and involved - yes: but not to have executive authority.

Such criticisms and the backbencher's warning that unless the Scottish Office education minister toned down some of his more radical ideas, the Government may have difficulty pushing through its Scottish Education Bill given the small number of Scottish Conservative MPs did not deflect Forsyth. Buchanan-Smith was consistent in his opposition until the Bill

was going through Parliament when he won certain concessions and assurances.

Throughout the extended consultation period, responses were made public by national bodies such as EIS, local authorities, Scottish Consumer Council (SCC), SPTC, churches. While certain responses were perhaps unsurprising, from Labour dominated Regional Councils such as Strathclyde, many politically non-aligned authorities such as Borders, Highland and the Western Isles came out against the proposals; Dumfries and Galloway's education convener stressed financial aspects:

..the fundamental flaw in this whole thing is the cost: if we had an extra £500,000 for education is this how we would choose to spend it? I don't think so.

(John Jameson, D&G Region)

While in Fife, Magnus More, director of education, commented:

The proposals are dangerous in that they provide a means by which schools would be divided and become largely independent, conditional upon the motivations, determination and articulation of some parents.

Others such as Tayside published substantial objective analyses prepared by a team of executive officers drawn from a range of regional services including education and offered alternative proposals which admitted that school councils required reform; of course that had never been doubted, but the stimulus of Forsyth's proposals provoked thoughtful and analytical responses in addition to 'knee-jerk' reactions. David Robertson, Tayside director of education, argued that a forum of parents in each school would be a better start to involving them in their children's education than the

introduction of boards, which the officials viewed as problematic. The forum would "raise issues relevant to the running of the school, what is taught, how it is taught, access to the school, road safety, buses, crossing patrols, attendants truancy, parents' meetings, school meals, school clothing, homework and many other vital but day-to-day issues". The headteacher would organise the forum and report to it on the running of the school. This alternative vision of parental participation, generated because Robertson accepted it was "no use simply rubbishing what this Government says", emphasised accountability by the headteacher but also provided for discussion and clarification of parental needs and concerns on matters of specific interest to them. One may criticise the 'peripheral' areas suggested such as school meals as being distracters for parents, but many parents are interested in such matters and there was scope within these alternatives for dialogue about the central issues of curriculum and teaching approaches.

The published views were widely reported and seized upon by opponents of the proposals or by Forsyth to amplify or support their viewpoint. In October 1987, the SCC published the results of a poll which showed 57 per cent of parents of school-age children in favour of having "an important say" in the running of their school. This was claimed by Forsyth as support for his proposals, but the SCC clarified that the poll did not convey what parents thought about the precise executive role proposed for boards. The poll showed that the least support came from the professional and managerial classes, where only 41% thought the boards were a good idea, these social classes are traditional categories of possible support for the Conservatives so such a figure was not entirely encouraging. The poll showed strong support for the boards in

Strathclyde, possibly because of the much-criticised system of school councils, whereas in Lothian, in particular, support persisted for school councils because of the changes the Authority had introduced to promote council and parental involvement in the selection of senior staff for example.

Management is clearly not participation (cf discussion of management models and possible approaches in Chapter 5), and the major objections in 1987 (confirmed by the analysis of responses to the consultative exercise) focused on the proposed management role for parents centred around serious practical obstacles to such proposals: parents were untrained for management and they would have only a few years' involvement before their children moved out of the school and parents moved off the board. This has been borne out by the subsequent experience of boards and the work which they do discussed in Chapter 9 (Munn and Holroyd 1989; Arney *et al.* 1992; MacBeath *et al.* 1992; Munn 1993b; MacBeath 1994).

8.8 The analysis of the 1987 consultative exercise returns

Comments and views were requested by the Scottish Office and on its completion the revised estimate was that 7,600 were received (TSES, p.5, 18.12.87). Approximately half of these are accessible on public file in 42 pink folders in the Scottish Office Library, while the remainder remain closed to public scrutiny because respondents wished them to remain confidential or because they were responses to the 'purple' summary document circulated in schools and not formally regarded as a response to the consultation paper. Chapter 2 indicates the methodology and procedures adopted in my selection of the sample and analysis of the publicly available returns.

In all, the responses sampled and analysed indicated an overwhelming rejection of the original proposals. Responses varied in the intensity of their views; many respondents were brief, others brutal, eg an individual response from Grampian Region asserted "... it reads like a scenario for disaster concocted by Colonel Gaddafi (*sic*) or Tony Benn...The document should be quietly shredded". A parent writing from Edinburgh expressed the hope "in the light of public opinion, that the Government will think again and come up with something a bit more sensible!" While a Glasgow parent reminded Forsyth that "you and your colleagues have been democratically elected to govern not to dictate". Another individual in Highland Region took a similar line, "Surely, if we are to change things for the better, then the organisation of our children's education should be through consultation and co-operation, rather than by bull-dozing".

- **Original sample: distribution of responses**

The Original sample as described in Chapter 2 (pp.28-29) involved scrutiny of every eighth response to the consultative exercise, constituting a 10% sample of the publicly available SED records.

The distribution of responses was of initial interest. Table 8.1 overleaf gives the distribution by the then existing Regional Authorities of the Original sample of responses analysed, and offers an indication of the percentage distribution by population which might have been expected. There are clearly interesting comparisons between a reasonable expectation based on the distribution of population and the actual geographical distribution of the returns. Strathclyde (especially Glasgow) is the most populated area of the country with around 46% of the population and might have been expected to provide a similar proportion

of responses but just 20% were returned from the central/west belt. The north of the country, particularly Grampian and Highland Regions, provided almost double the percentage return than might have been expected. One may speculate that the Aberdeen based 'Education Alert' campaign co-ordinated by Diana Daly had a significant impact on the generation of such responses.

**Table 8.1: Original sample of 1987 consultative exercise:
Number of Returns by Region**

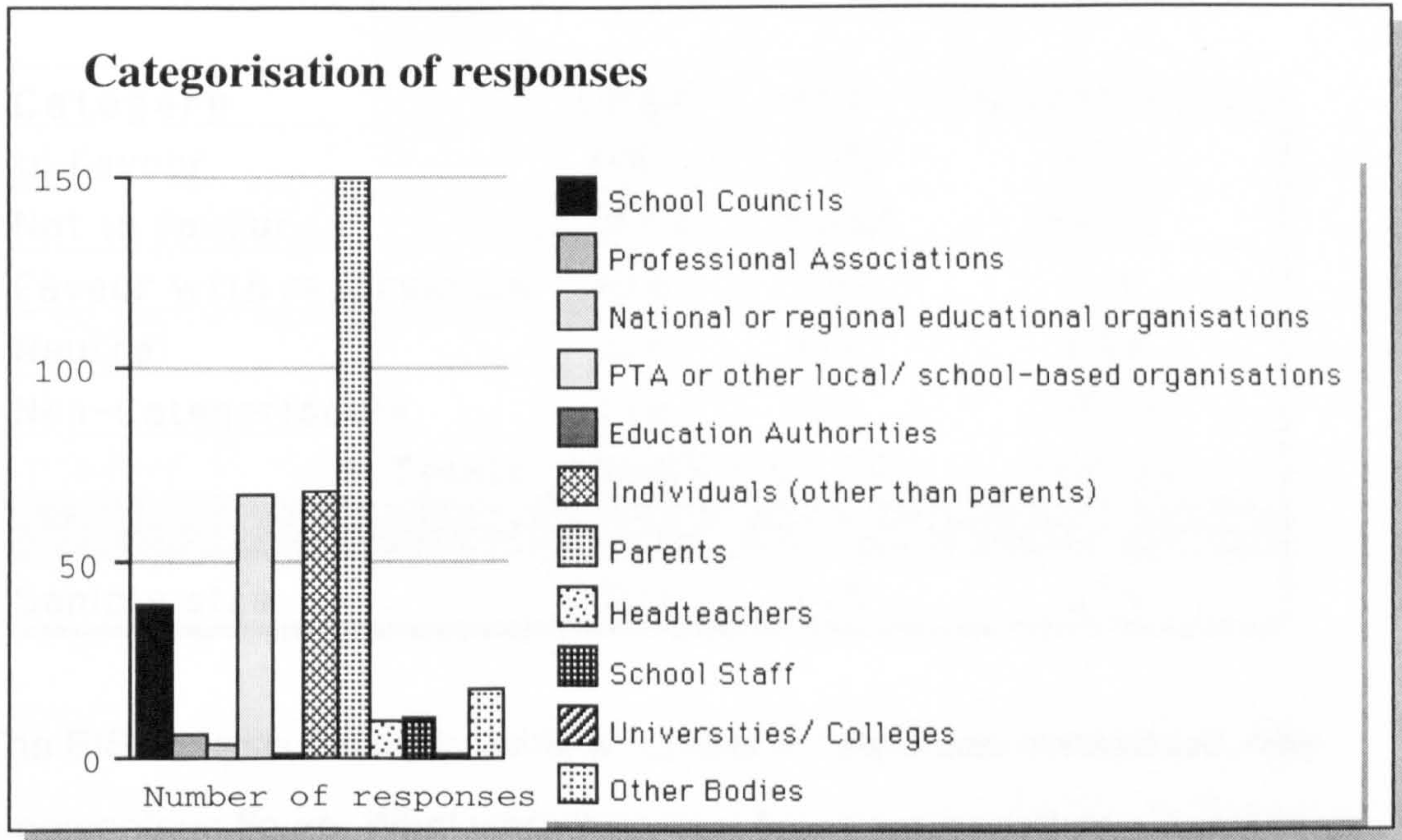
Distribution of Responses				
	1988			
REGION	POPULATION	%	Original	Original
		DISTRIBUTION	sample	sample
		BY		
		POPULATION	Nos	%
Strathclyde	1,613,553	32%	55	15%
Glasgow	703,186	14%	19	5%
Lothian	307,699	6%	43	11%
Edinburgh	433,480	9%	52	14%
Central	271,526	5%	14	4%
Fife	344,717	7%	14	4%
Borders	102,592	2%	11	3%
D&G	147,482	3%	15	4%
Tayside	393,748	8%	30	8%
Grampian	501,394	10%	68	18%
Highland	201,866	4%	31	8%
Islands Authorities	72,758	1%	10	3%
Not Known	0	0%	12	3%
Outside Scotland	0	0%	1	0%
	5,094,001	101%	375	100%

The other interesting 'anomaly' is the 10% more than expected returns from Lothian and Edinburgh. Does this reflect the activities of Mrs. Judith Gillespie and the Lothian Parents' Action Group (LPAG) [originally

established by parents of Sciennes PS in 1985 during the period of teacher industrial unrest]? The media at the time gave prominence to the activities of these groups and LPAG even offered an analysis of the first 951 publicly available returns which indicated 6% in favour of the proposals - there is no indication of the methodology which LPAG adopted. There are additionally examples of multiple returns (usually individually signed photocopies of a letter or statement) both from the Grampian area and from Lothian, eg negative parent responses from Newmachar school in Grampian Region.

The responses were quantified in the present study against certain categories illustrated below. The predominant responses come from parents and individuals, thus perhaps lending substance to the claims that the response on the proposals for school boards was unprecedented.

Figure 8.a: Number of responses by category



As noted above LPAG conducted an analysis of the first returns, additionally the EIS offered a post process analysis of the responses in January 1988. The EIS surveyed a random 20% of the submissions sent to the Scottish Education Department, which showed that there was virtually total opposition to Mr. Forsyth’s radical plans for reforming school management. A table (presumably missing certain information as the sample size was not revealed and a less than 100% indication of returns was given, cf Table 8.2 below) indicating 1% in favour, 3.5% offering support with reservation and 85.8% against appeared in the 15.1.88 edition of the TSES (p.3). These two sets of 'results' can be compared with those of my own analysis in Table 8.2. This comparison between the three approaches to the returns provides an element of external triangulation showing broad agreement that the disparity between those in favour and those not in favour was substantial, but that my own analysis into other categories was more sensitive.

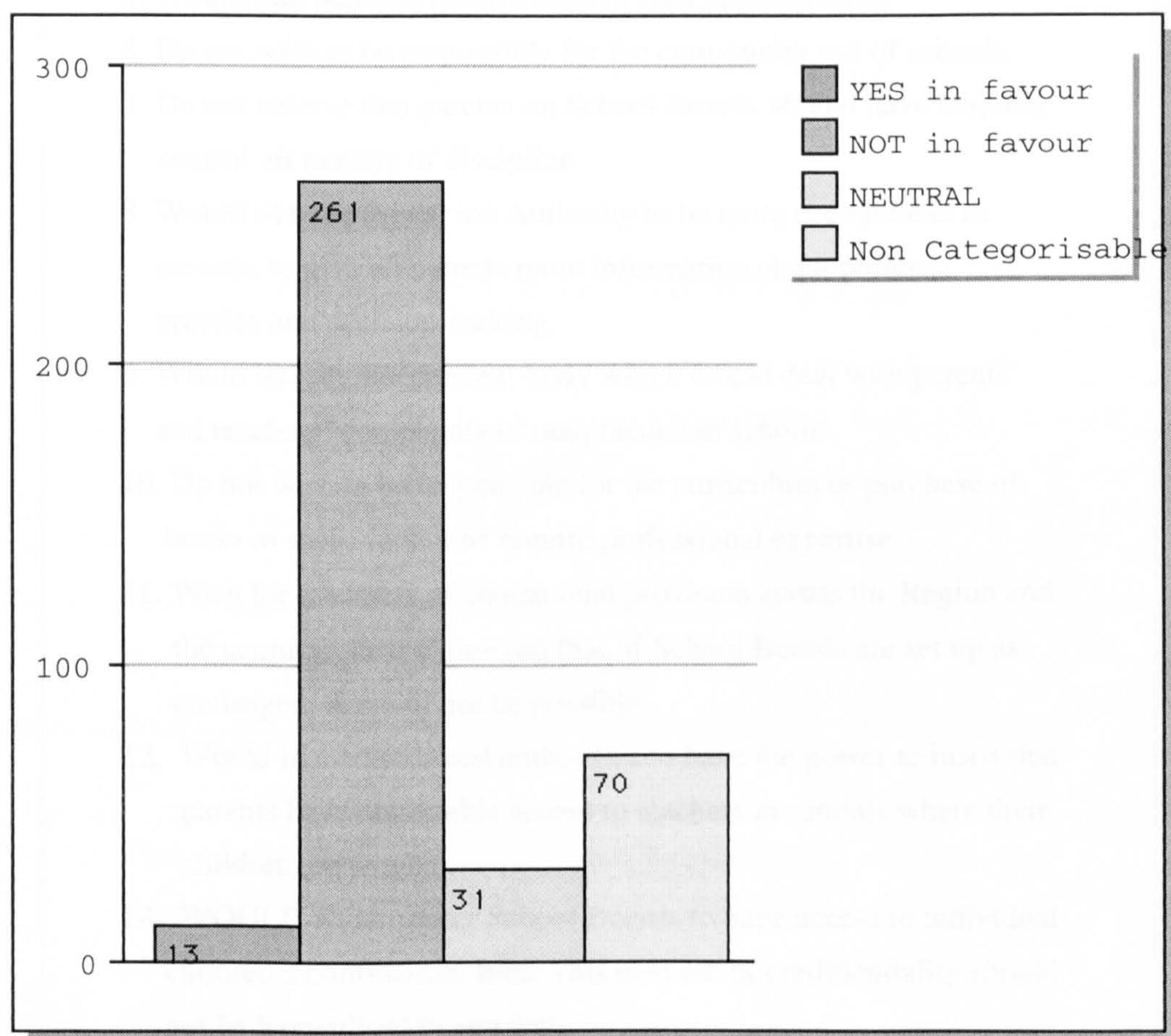
Table 8.2: Comparison with informal reported analyses

Category	LPAG	EIS	Present Study
In Favour	6.0%	1.0%	3.5%
Not in favour	94.0%	85.8%	69.6%
Favour with reservation	n/a	3.5%	n/a
Neutral	n/a	n/a	8.2%
Non-Categorisable	n/a	n/a	18.7%
Totals	100.0%	90.3%	100.0%
Sample size	921	20%	375

The EIS analysis did not provide a number of responses considered, only a percentage figure. What were the views being expressed as a result of my sampling? Overall there were very few respondents who welcomed or endorsed the proposals. Figure 8.b illustrates the number of responses of

the sample which were in FAVOUR or were NOT in Favour of the proposals, while others were adjudged by me to be clearly NEUTRAL in their response ie. no expressed preference was contained within the response and the remainder were non-categorisable.

Figure 8.b: Original sample returns by type of response



Less than 4% were supportive of the proposals as opposed to almost 70% who rejected them. Many of the non-categorisable element, amounting to some 19%, were less than complimentary about the proposals but the emphasis in their responses tended to relate to requests to extend the short consultation period or raised a range of issues without clearly offering a statement of support for or rejection of the proposals eg several identical responses were received as follows:

1. Welcome opportunity for greater parental involvement.
2. Deplore the short consultation time.
3. Do not wish to be financial responsible in the running of schools.
4. Would like Headteachers and Education officials to have a vote on School Boards when they are being established.
5. Would like parental involvement in staff appointments.
6. Do not wish to be responsible for the community use of schools.
7. Do not believe that parents on School Boards should have majority control on matters of discipline.
8. Would like the Education Authority to be more accountable to parents, to give all parents more information about policies, practice and decision-making.
9. Would like an independent body which would deal with parents' and teachers' complaints of malpractice in schools.
10. Do not wish to be responsible for the curriculum or purchase of books as these functions require professional expertise.
11. Wish for evenness of educational provision across the Region and the country. Fear expressed that, if School Boards are set up as envisaged, this will not be possible.
12. Would like educational authorities to have the power to insist that parents have reasonable access to teachers in schools where their children are taught.
13. WOULD NOT expect School Boards to have access to individual children's confidential files. This element of confidentiality should not be jeopardised in any way.

(Parent response: one of several identical responses- Mimeographed letter; Borders)

or,

In view of the far-reaching nature of the changes proposed the consultation period is wholly inadequate. We would suggest that the deadline be extended to 1st January, 1988. To rush into legislation as radical as this without full consultation is to invite disaster. (Woodland Special School)

It should be noted that many of the issues raised in this type of 'non-categorisable' response (*in my terms*) were also highlighted in replies categorised as IN Favour or NOT in Favour. The fact that there is no clear categorical statement of favour or rejection makes them non-categorisable.

• **Original sample: Returns in favour of boards**

Those who were **in favour** of the proposals were limited to a small number of mainly parental and PTA responses.

Table 8.3: Responses in favour of School Boards by category

Category	Nos of responses	%Original Sample
PTA other local/school-based organisation	5	1.3%
Individuals (other than parents)	1	0.3%
Parents	7	1.9%
Total	13	3.5%

Some of these responses were supportive without qualification, eg

The majority of those attending the meeting was... supportive of the proposals as they provided a clear and certain channel for parents to have a constructive influence on the standard of education provided for their children.
(Muckhart PS, PTA)

The remainder of the categories returned 0% in favour of the board proposals. There was an overwhelming vote of no confidence in the proposals from the entire range of individuals, interests and organisations; the overall number of responses was unprecedented for such consultative exercises and they provided an overwhelming rejection of the government's proposals.

Even those who clearly **favoured** school boards or an alternative to the *status quo* had certain reservations, for example

We believe each school irrespective of size should have its own separate School Board thus avoiding conflicting interests within a Board... we agree an a parental majority; however, we feel that the emphasis on membership should be on those with a direct interest ie parents and teachers. We feel that a minimum of one voting teacher member is inadequate and may not be fully representative of staff views.

We feel that the positions of local community representatives could be open to ulterior interests, particularly of a political nature and that it is therefore not necessary to have more than one community representative who should be elected rather than co-opted.

(Houston PS, PTA)

Some parental responses were scathing of school councils:

1. The School Councils are irrelevant and unrepresentative.
2. Too closed and mostly unknown by parents because they don't add anything democratic. Democratic control of school and usually parents are frustrated at the lack of the influence in situations. They should be reformed or disbanded.

(Parent response, Highland Region)

Some parents offered a warning about the school boards initiative, but others were optimistic about prospects for the new boards;

It is precisely because consultative functions are too easily ignored by those who manage schools that School Councils and P.T.A.'s are often poorly supported. Given real responsibility there will be no shortage of parents prepared to understand

budgets and spending priorities; to satisfy themselves that their schools are being properly managed in the interests of their children; to assess the suitability of candidates for, and holders of, teaching positions; to encourage all parents to share in these responsibilities through P.T.A.'s and otherwise, and to seek to make their schools responsive to the wider community as well as the educational establishment.

(Parent response, Strathclyde Region)

Some 30% (114 responses of all categories) of replies to the consultative exercise analysed, indicated in principle support for the greater involvement and participation of parents, but did not always agree or specify type of appropriate involvement and were concerned particularly about the management role envisaged eg

It was agreed that, while parents were in favour of more parental involvement, the meeting did not believe that School Boards defined in the document was a way forward. The meeting objected to... parental control of management and finance.

(PTA response: Canongate)

We believe that parents do have a legitimate right and indeed a duty to be involved in their children's education... that schools should be more open and accountable to parents... that parents have a right to be better informed and to be consulted on the curriculum offered to their children... that Schools Councils, as presently constituted, do not serve these legitimate interests of parents.

(School Staff response: Hunter PS)

nor was there substantial support for the remainder of the proposals; as one SC response in the form of a motion suggested,

"This Council accepts the need for more parental involvement in schools but rejects this document as a means of achieving this by reason of the fact that it is too imprecise, too ill defined and leaves too many areas open for too wide an interpretation to be valuable as a basic document for discussion."

(Gordon Schools, Huntly)

While an individual response offered:

It would be wrong to say that we are totally satisfied by present arrangements for the involvement of parents in school affairs.

We can agree... that parents should have some "direct access or influence over the making of decisions which affect the schools in which their children are educated"... these proposals for School Boards go considerably too far, replacing "access and influence" with control; taking decision making away from those educated, trained and professionally qualified both to manage and to teach and placing it in the hands of amateurs.

The above submission indicates that a limited number of respondents were aware of issues and concepts and their inter-relationships for example the differences between control and influence and the possibilities of governance and its relationship to executive managers. It must be said that such insights were rare from individual replies, the preponderance of which gave clear signals that the proposals were rejected or unacceptable.

Even the EIS took up the refrain and supported the need for greater involvement by parents, while searching for an alternative vision.

1.1 The EIS has long argued that the role of parents in Scottish education needs to be developed and that this is one of the areas in which the Scottish educational system is not pre-eminent

and, indeed, lags behind the systems of other countries.

9.3 The present proposals are... largely irrelevant to the real needs of parents as well as hugely damaging to the fabric of the Scottish educational system... we shall continue our own efforts to find the right formula for parental involvement in the schools (EIS national response)

Only one analysed response dissented from the suggestion of greater parental involvement. This was from an Edinburgh SC chairperson,

...The running of schools should generally be left to the professionals... We would disagree with the philosophy of "greater parental involvement" but this involvement must be of a consultative rather than a material nature.

What was generally agreed in the responses was that the government's proposals were significantly different from the current provision. School councils did not fare well with only 9% of all the **Original Sample** replies indicating they should be retained but reformed.

- **Original sample: returns neutral about the proposals**

The **neutral** responses were concerned with other issues for example the role of community education schools which were not mentioned in the proposals or offered a range of queries and concerns about specifics within the proposals but offered no firm indication of being in favour of the proposals or against them eg

- concerns about church representation on boards with the view that it was important for the Church of Scotland to be given the same representation as RC Church which was the opposite of the view that

Table 8.4: Original sample: Neutral responses by category

Categories	Nos	%
School Councils	7	1.9%
National or regional educational organisations	2	0.5%
PTA or other local/ school-based organisations	4	1.1%
Individuals (other than parents)	7	1.9%
Parents	4	1.1%
Headteachers	2	0.5%
Other Bodies	5	1.3%
Totals	31	8.3%

- no church representation be allowed except for denominational schools;
- strongly expressed views that schools were a community resource.
 - Original sample: Returns NOT in favour of the proposals**
School councils expressed a range of views against the proposals including resentful belief that ideas had been imported from England, alienation of professionals, recipes for conflict between schools and

Table 8.5: Original sample: returns NOT in favour of proposals

Categories	NOT in favour	%
School Councils	24	6.4%
Professional Associations	5	1.3%
National or regional educational organisations	2	0.5%
PTA or other local/ school-based organisations	48	12.8%
Education Authorities	0	0.0%
Individuals (other than parents)	48	12.8%
Parents	111	29.6%
Headteachers	7	1.9%
School Staff	7	2.4%
Universities/ Colleges	0	0.0%
Other Bodies	9	1.9%
Total	261	69.6%

education authorities, loss of links between primary and secondary schools and lack of appropriate skills and knowledge by parents eg

... the Council saw the proposed School Boards as both foreign in character and intent to the present Scottish education system and consider that these proposals would result in an inevitable deterioration in a tried and tested educational system.

(Isla and Jura SC)

There is a strong likelihood of conflict between Education Authorities and individual Schools Boards. The Council also question the practicality and desirability of parents having the overall majority on such a Board because of their lack of experience, expertise and training. They believe that factional or short term interests could distort their operation.

(Kirkintilloch No 1 SC, Strathclyde Region)

Much time was spent discussing the differences between involvement and control, between consultative and executive powers. On the whole, the Council prefers parental involvement, with consultative powers, rather than parental control, with executive powers.

(Inverness HS SC, Highlands Region)

This School Council is very firmly in support of the existing broadly-based School Council system of membership in Central Region, in which each School Council is composed of a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. The Members feel that the links between primary and secondary, schools are worthwhile preserving, and that setting up one School Council per school would break one of the links which have taken years to establish.

(Falkirk East SC, Central Region)

The two national or regional educational organisations were local associations of headteachers (it should be noted that the majority of

returns from such bodies were neutral or non-categorisable because they were careful not to be regarded as against parents or parent involvement) who offered 'not in favour' replies:

The proposals do not concern themselves with the educational welfare of our children. Scant regard is paid to this and we find no educational basis whatever for the sweeping changes envisaged, nor can we find any evidence to support the view that parents want the powers to be given to these boards.
(Borders Headteachers' Association Executive)

The responses from PTAs were no less robust and ranged from peremptory rejection of the proposals to more focused mirroring of the government's stated intentions:

...members found it disconcerting that the first paper issued by a newly appointed and uniquely inexperienced minister does not concern itself with education. Nowhere can we find his aspirations for the education service and how he hopes to improve the quality of education for each and every one of our children. Parent-power is a non issue with the members of this association, although they fully grasped that the proposals as outlined would not extend the scope of influence for parents in schools, except for board members. (Banchory PS PTA, Central Region)

The Government's principle that "as far as possible local decisions should be taken at local level" is, in the P.T.A's view, already being met by the existing local Government system whereby local regional councillors are ultimately answerable to their electorate in a democratic fashion... The proposed system would involve parents much too deeply in the education system and the P.T.A. would seriously query whether this is in fact what parents want... the P.T.A. do not believe parents want a central role in school management, staff appointments or financial control. (Fettercairn PS, PTA)

The conclusion of this P.T.A. ... is that these proposals are motivated more by political dogma than by concern for education, and they are unworkable and unwelcome...

(Rothienorman PTA, Grampian Region)

The individual responses reflected many of the concerns expressed by some of the organisational returns and offered some alternative perspectives of their own:

The procedure for School Board elections would not attract the calibre of people who would serve on such a Board. Board members will treat their appointment as a hobby with Board meetings out of working hours in an amateurish fashion, which will debase the function of this important body.

(Individual response: Highland Region)

Radical change is always disturbing and the tendency to cling to status quo, warts and all, is always strong. The fear of power not yet tasted and the reluctance to accept it is particularly interesting. Even today in peacetime there exists in this Country under Military Law, in certain circumstances, for Courts Martial to award sentence of death. To my knowledge it has not been invoked for several decades. Common sense generally prevails.

The same common sense will, I am sure, guide and dictate the actions of future parent members of the proposed School Boards, and if legislation to enforce their participation in school affairs is necessary to dispel apathy then one must, however reluctantly, applaud it.

(Individual response reporting negative reaction by parents to proposals: Edinburgh)

People want involvement in education, but they want involvement in its process not its management... their concerns are personal, not managerial.

(Individual response: Tayside Region)

...the West Highland Communities... would welcome being given greater information and powers of consultation with their local schools. They would wish this within the present format of the School Council system, which has a broad-based membership, but requires more teeth and slightly more power. (Regional Councillor individual response: Highland Region)

The document would have the public believe that no training is required on the part of the educationalists, that no professional skill is required in education, that there are no issues ... wider than the immediate requirements of a single school and that running a school and all that it entails is a job so unimportant that it can be done by a few neighbours on a voluntary basis. The proposals are an insult to our children. (Individual response: Glasgow)

No attempt is made to justify the required presence of representatives of local business interests and of the churches. No evidence is given that members of the business community are better equipped to govern our schools than any other occupational group, the retired or the unemployed. It seems unlikely that their inclusion is arbitrary, but likely that they share common political ground with the present government. (Individual response: Islands Authority)

Parents are not, as a class, defined by any thing other than fertility at some stage. Parents are not necessarily (*sic*) informed, talented or available in respect of education management. Even as to motivation, parenthood can mean anything from a constructive caring attitude, to indifference, to downright silly and destructive ideas. Why do the authors of this document elevate parents to a role they cannot be expected to fill? (Individual response: Islands Authority)

Of course parent views, the largest category of responses recording a **Not in favour** response, while perhaps not sharing the concerns of the

individual response immediately above, reflected many of the fears and reservations expressed, but again brought their own unique perspective to bear.

Teachers are professional people who have been trained to teach children, parents have not. I believe teachers should be allowed to get on with their job without interference from 'Boards'.

(Parent response: Strathclyde)

We read the consultation paper first with incredulity and finally with alarm and our worries, given the current state of unemployment, as to whether our children will ever find jobs have given way to more immediate worries as to whether our children will receive a decent education if this goes through.

(Parent response: Tayside Region)

There appears to be no further authority, short of God and the Secretary of State, to whom the School Board will it-self be accountable.

(Parent response, Fife)

Unfortunately, because of the heavy emphasis on finances and budgetary control in the Government's proposals, I can't help feeling that a significant (*sic*) underlying factor is that of cutting SED costs by passing responsibility for the provision of basic resources back to the parents... I do not think it is appropriate to thrust major additional responsibilities relating to education into the voluntary sector nor do I believe that that is what parents want when they say they would like more involvement in the education of their children.

(Parent response, Grampian)

- **Special Interests Sample**

The above analyses are based on clusters of types of responses. However, as intimated in the Methodology Chapter (p.31) I was also concerned to investigate viewpoints from parties such as EAs and professional associations. Tthese included both national and local replies; eg if a school's EIS members responded this was categorised as a professional association response. The categories are in Table 8.6 below.

Table 8.6: Special Interests Sample: Categories of response

Special Interests Sample		
Categories	Nos	%
Education Authorities	8	2.8%
Political bodies	21	7.4%
Churches	33	11.7%
Education related responses	12	4.3%
Industry & Commerce responses	12	4.3%
District Councils	4	1.4%
Community Councils	20	7.1%
National bodies	9	3.2%
Individuals	9	3.2%
Professional associations	53	18.8%
National/regional educ. organisation responses	21	7.4%
PTA/other local educ. organisation responses	1	0.4%
School staff	62	22.0%
Universities/Colleges	4	1.4%
Other	13	4.6%
Total	282	100.0%

In all 282 responses were analysed. The preponderance of these (61%) were not in favour of school boards with only 4% clearly expressing a preference for boards, yet 38% of the Special Interests Sample stated clearly that they supported more parental involvement.

- **Special Interests sample: School staff responses**

Concerns raised by school staff were not unexpected and the general tone and sentiment was exemplified thus:

...we have always been and remain in favour of increased parental involvement in schools... most teachers would accept this premise and that it is not a new idea. Indeed most school staffs, in our experience, complain that parents will not or do not get involved with schools, finding, as we do, a reluctance in parents to become involved in school councils or parent associations.

(Kirklandneuk PS)

There was limited support for school council reform as these "bodies are representative and united; they contain educational and community groupings and protect the interests of schools" (Ladywood PS). There was evidence of knowledge of the national EIS response with reference to the *Home from School* (MacBeath, Mearns and Smith, 1986) report cited in support of the contention that parents did not wish such involvement (when interviewing MacBeath I confirmed my reading of the report that such issues had not been put to any parents as part of that research). The parental majority proposed was widely criticised and the perceived transfer of control of educational provision to what would be, to quote one member of staff, "a group of part-time, temporary, self-centred amateurs" was threatening to staff.

- **Special Interests sample: Professional association responses**

These responses reflected local and national opinion; of 53 such submissions, 22 expressed support for greater parental involvement but not necessarily through school boards, 8 wanting revamped school councils. Only one favoured the proposed boards, but with the qualification:

... the atmosphere of serenity which should surround a school will be troubled by teachers trying to please parents instead of getting on with their work.. education will suffer a great deal in the hands of inexperienced theorists, especially in those areas in which the parents are apathetic or forceful..

Clear opposition to boards was expressed by 37 returns and it was suggested that parents did not wish such change.

What parents want, we feel, is more information about the progress of their children at school and about what is happening at school. There has been no popular pressure for an increased role in the management of schools. (Doon Academy EIS)

There were concerns about the parental majority, parent apathy and the capacity of parents to participate with full involvement.

We feel that parents should be more involved in the decision making process, but that a guaranteed majority on the School Board would be to no-one's benefit. (Ellon Academy EIS)

We can see no evidence that parents in our school wish to be involved in school management any more than they are currently. (Mayfield PS EIS)

We do not believe that, even with a provision for some training of board members, a board composed mainly of parents can provide the professional expertise which is required for the management of a school. (SFHEA national response)

There were indications that teachers were alert to accountability functions and the need to relate well to parents, but there was no clear consensus that present arrangements were adequate,

...it is right and proper that parents be consulted on matters concerning curriculum, assessment, school resources, reporting, policies of school discipline and regulations, etc. and they are entitled to receive annual reports on the running of the school. ...these matters can be dealt with through the present school councils and there is certainly no need for the formation of a completely new system of school boards.
(Tayside Region Association of Catholic Headteachers)

Too many School Councils have suffered from the apathy and ennui displayed by their electorate and even by their members. ...where this malaise exists, the primary cause has been the extremely limited role, functions and powers given to Schools Councils by some education authorities.
(SSTA national response)

Alternative roles for parents were mooted:

There is undoubtedly a greater role for parents to play in enhancing the educational provision of their children, but we trust that common sense and public opinion will be permitted to prevail in this matter and that parents shall become more involved in their children's education as consumers and not as executives.
(John Bosco SS EIS)

As noted above on p. 237-238, the national EIS response offered the view that the proposals were:

...largely irrelevant to the real needs of parents as well as hugely damaging to the fabric of the Scottish educational system... we shall continue our own efforts to find the right formula for parental involvement in the schools and we shall urge our members... in particular, to devise procedures at school level for improving information to parents and parental access to the school.

- **Special Interests sample: Church responses**

In all 31 replies were made by church organisations, principally by Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions of the Church of Scotland in addition to a national submission from the same Church's General Assembly Education Committee which accepted that while "there are many good and acceptable points in the Consultation Paper, the present proposals are considered likely to lead to a divisiveness among all interested parties". Submissions were forthcoming from Episcopalian and a Roman Catholic diocese (Aberdeen) which expressed real concerns "about the omission of any reference to the current legislation which, in respect of denominational schools, requires the approval of teachers, provision of time for religious education and the appointment of a supervisor approved by the Church authorities". A joint response was made by the Catholic Education Commission and the Church of Scotland which included several major areas of agreement between both churches on certain aspects of the proposals; they endorsed the notion of partnership but rejected the 'ceiling powers'.

No overt support was offered for the school board proposals; 18 clearly rejected the notion and only 9 replies indicated support for greater parental involvement,

No one who is interested in the welfare of state education could object to the principle of persuading parents to take more interest and become more involved in the life of their children's school. It is in the practicalities of the situation that the problems arise.

(Presbytery of Edinburgh Education Committee)

- **Special Interests sample: Political responses**

Unsurprisingly 18 of the 21 responses were clearly opposed to the proposals (none offered support and only 8 agreed with enhanced parental involvement and there were no Conservative responses). The principal objections related to the parental majority; this was viewed as less of an extension as a contraction of democracy. Schools, it was claimed, were community resources and more representatives of the community should be allowed their say rather than parents. There were comments about the government's 'hidden agenda' of and general strategy "to downgrade and bypass local authorities" because most were "in the hands of Labour and where the Scottish people voted so overwhelmingly against the Government" (Merchiston/Morningside Labour Party Branch). The spectre of giving "School Boards the option of opting out of the Education Authority System" was also raised (Renfrew West/Inverclyde SNP). The Alliance Group on Lothian Region Council suggested the proposals confused

...greater consultation and involvement, which many parents desire, with parental management, which they clearly do not want; it also confuses a partnership between parents and staff in determining school policy, which is an excellent goal, with parental involvement in the implementation of that policy and interference in the management of the school to which almost everyone concerned is strongly opposed.

Concerns were also expressed by other responses about the potential for chaos and confusion if "parent dominated boards" were to run schools. Many points were common to those made by other respondents, such as unrepresentative cliques, non-professional decisions etc but a few were distinctive. These were:

- * idiosyncratic curriculum decisions emerging eg in religious education to meet individual preferences of board members;
- * outmoded forms of teaching being forced upon a school;
- * board members abusing their position to discipline and even dismiss teachers;
- * dominance of co-opted members from the business community and churches including idea of certain churches being guaranteed a co-opted member while representatives of other churches are not;
- * some schools being in a better position to fund raise than others;
- * powers of boards over who uses school facilities disadvantaging certain sections of the community.

The general conclusion was that schools should try to enhance parental involvement but that schools should continue to be run by professionals accountable to democratically elected representatives. The concerns raised were similar to a range of responses in the Original Sample and suggest that there may be substantial active local participation in a range of affairs and bodies such as political parties, trade unions, community groups which allows views to be shared and expressed. Schools are not the only forums for activity. It may be that parents active in other spheres do not see the need to become involved in schools because they are content to leave this to education authorities and education professionals.

8.9 Overview of issues raised by 'Special Interests' respondents

What were the issues and views raised by the 'Special Interests' respondents? These were identified through analysis of the returns and the issues which respondents felt important and are quantified and compared in quantitative terms with returns in the Original Sample in Table 8.7 overleaf .

Surprisingly there are few differences in percentage terms between the two samples though this could mean that the special interests groups had been effective in influencing the views of the generality of respondents. The two topics about which the 'Special Interests' sample expressed slightly greater concern than those in the general sample are related to the role of the headteacher and potential undermining of the professional role. 'Ceiling powers' despite the press hysteria are not prominent. While representation and the skills or willingness of parents to become involved are issues raised by a number of respondents, this analysis demonstrates the range of interest and concerns which respondents had.

- **The role of the headteacher and undermining of professionals**

Responses indicated concern that the headteacher was being disadvantaged by not being proposed as a member of the board and not having a vote while members of staff elected to the board would be able to vote,

We believe that the Head Teacher is the key person in the school and that they should be a full voting member of any board. It might also be beneficial to include in the legislation the requirement that the Head Teacher is the school manager with total responsibility for the school, not just the curriculum and teaching side of it. (Individual response)

The management of the school at local level should be the Headteacher's responsibility. I appreciate that consultation with parents on certain issues is both important and necessary, but this does not warrant giving parents all the school management tasks. (Individual response)

It is imperative the Head Teacher retains overall control of the day to day operation of the school... (Parent response)

Table 8.7: Comparison of issues raised

Issues raised by respondents	Original Sample	Special Interests
	Nos 375	Nos 282
Balance of representation	18.7%	17.4%
A Board per school	11.7%	7.8%
Budget issues	7.5%	6.0%
Ceiling powers unacceptable	10.7%	9.2%
Community is more than "business"	3.7%	3.9%
Confidentiality issues	2.4%	1.1%
Boards will mean conflict with EA	3.5%	3.9%
Consultation wanted not executive control	12.3%	9.9%
Damage to curriculum	3.2%	3.9%
Different curricula will emerge/curriculum control	1.3%	1.4%
Divisions because parents may/may not attract funds	7.5%	8.9%
Election issues/term of office	10.4%	9.6%
Executive powers on uniform/discipline	1.1%	0.0%
Financial costs	8.5%	6.4%
Improve standards?	4.0%	5.0%
Parents too busy-children/jobs- lack skills	19.5%	12.4%
Pandering too a minority/ control by minority	7.2%	7.4%
PTA links with Boards necessary	3.2%	2.8%
Professionals being undermined by proposals	9.3%	11.0%
Prominent role for non-professionals	7.2%	7.1%
Politicisation of school management	2.1%	1.4%
Boards will reduce cooperation between schools	1.1%	1.8%
Reduce cooperation between parents/teachers	2.1%	2.8%
Role of HT	16.3%	18.8%
Secondary school pupil role	2.1%	0.7%
Training needs	8.0%	7.1%

In the Original Sample a school council reply from Edinburgh suggested the

Professional standing of all teachers is placed at risk with the assumption that qualified amateurs can run a school and make curriculum decisions as well as qualified and experienced staff. This would surely devalue the whole education system and discourage people from entering the profession.

An individual response suggested

For many years we have suffered from headteachers and Directors of Education knowing 'what is good for the children' without any consultation with parents. Now it seems that the Government's plan is to swing things totally the other way and force the teachers to do as they are told by parents. Surely, if we are to change things for the better, then the organisation of our children's education should be through consultation and co-operation, rather than by bull-doing.

I think that the Government had misjudged the feeling about parents about schooling. Most of us are content to allow teachers to get on with their work, and indeed, since we acknowledge that it is society that pays for our children's education, it does not seem unreasonable that society as a whole should decide upon matters of the curriculum.

This kind of interference would not be tolerated in any other sphere of life...I cannot possibly conceive of the day when committees of patients are able to appoint consultants within their hospitals. (Parent response)

Some respondents were unequivocal about the role of the headteacher in relation to the board eg

The Headmaster should act as the Managing Director of the School. As such he would be the Chairman of the School Board and would have the casting vote.

(Individual response)

- **Balance of representation and election issues**

The parental majority was viewed as problematic especially by professional or school responses, and was described as irrational. The perceived intention to pass control of educational provision offered by schools to what would be, to quote one primary school staff response, "a group of part-time, temporary, self-centred amateurs" or to "a random cabal of parents" (Lochaber Trades Council) was widely criticised. A more balanced but nevertheless as firm a view was provided by Fife Secondary HT Association,

...whilst the Association supports, and indeed welcomes a greater parental involvement in schools, it strongly opposes any move that will eventually give parents, or any other group or body, outright control of a school's policies or procedures.

Many comments insisted that the interest of parent members in "the traditions, policies and future of their school" would last only as long as their children were in attendance. Dalkeith Unemployed Workers insisted that an unrepresentative board which "...could alter the character of a school to suit their short term views must be avoided".

Allied to concerns about balance of representation was the issue of tenure of office of all members of school boards eg it was "anticipated that a three year term of office will be insufficient for the majority of representatives to fully understand and be able to cope with the demands of the School Boards" (The Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Edinburgh), and it was

recommended that school board representatives be eligible to serve two terms of office. An interesting role for co-opted representatives of church and business was mooted; they might prove to be the only 'stable' members of a board apart from the non-voting headteacher thus inexperienced parent members could be influenced by these established board members. Co-opted members did not merit universal approval, eg

The notion of co-opted members is quite offensive and is reminiscent of the constitutions of colonial legislative assemblies in the 1930s...the situation of co-opted members with rights and no responsibilities vis a vis Head Teachers and authority representatives with responsibility and no rights seems an unsound foundation for improved cooperation and management.

(Association of Educational Advisers in Scotland)

Many immediate concerns focused on the small size of the boards and that certain boards could be taken over by "unrepresentative groups of parents intent on pursuing their own personal, political or educational aims" (Orkney HT Association). A common request was to have greater teacher representation "to ensure that there is fair representation of the different groups on a Board" (Presbytery of Lothian). Lothian Region insisted that "no one group should have an overall majority of members."

The principal concerns raised about election issues were how these might be paid for and conducted and the range of potential difficulties respondents thought would ensue eg over postal voting in rural areas or electioneering,

How is a parent to become aware of the views of education held by anyone putting himself or herself forward as a candidate for election to the Board?

(Aberdeen Division Primary Headteachers' Association)

- **A board per school**

There was support for one board per school no matter its size, as this would prevent the "administrative chaos" of coping "with changing categories as school rolls change (up or down)" (Strathclyde School Councils Parents' Federation), and sometimes for specific reasons,

Every school should have the right to choose to have a school board, irrespective of size. This is of vital importance to Catholic schools whose numbers in certain areas are smaller than the average.

(Lothian Association of Catholic Headteachers)

We agree that each board should serve a single school because this is most likely to encourage parental involvement.

(Craigbank Secondary EIS)

There was a limited suggestion that boards might be optional for schools or that different models might pertain,

The Government should not seek to impose Boards on all schools. Schools should have the option of being able to have a Parent/Teacher Association with more limited powers than those proposed for the Boards.

(Lanarkshire Primary HT Association)

... while allowing the opportunity for voluntary amalgamation among smaller schools.

(Catholic Education Commission)

and the advantage of school councils having collective responsibilities on an area basis for attendance matters for example was asserted

Integrity of individual primary schools must be respected but the advantages of linking between secondary school and its feeder primaries must somehow be maintained. This covers both academic and community aspects. (School/College Councils are seen to provide this essential link at present.)
(Grampian Regional Councillor: Conservative)

There was some residual support for reformed school councils on the basis of one per school, but with "no direct responsibility for choosing any member of staff. These are the proper functions of the Local Authority".
(Fife Regional Labour Party)

8.10 The fears of the times

A substantial number of responses were received by Scottish Office from parental organisations, professional associations, local authorities, individual parents, teachers and academics, and other interested educational bodies in relation to Forsyth's school board proposals. When the consultation exercise was over the Times Supplement commented.

When Mr. Forsyth produced his ideas on the Boards, there was an overnight hubbub, which was stilled only when his second paper appeared to modify his proposals on the lines suggested by respondents to the first paper. There were 8,000 of them. Nothing like that number of people will be moved to send to the Scottish Education Department their views on what should be taught in schools, how it should be taught and whether there should be a national system of testing pupils' attainments. The external element in the government of schools proved of greater popular interest in the content of education.
In so far as that is an ironical comment on the democratic

process, it may be unfair. Parents felt able to voice their opinions about the extent of their own involvement in school management. They were persuaded by representative organisations to flood the SED with their views. On the curriculum and its assessment, they feel less qualified. (TSES: Leader, p.2, 6.2.88)

It is evident that the proposals were badly received not only by opposing politicians and the teaching profession but also by the unprecedented response by individuals alarmed at the scale and scope of the arrangements being proposed. There were fears for the future and concerns for the continuing well-being and fabric of Scottish education. An extreme expression of these fears, untypical but vivid, came from an individual response.

If these proposals become law, the new system is bound to have its casualties. Teachers will resign by the hundred, and many will, rightly, apply for legal redress. How will the school system cope? Will the new breed of teacher feel bound to bow to the will of individual boards? A professional body that is hamstrung by amateurs in the pursuance of its duties is bound to become demoralised, frightened and timorous. Standards of teaching and discipline will go out of the window.

Did the government listen and respond to such anxieties, whether expressed in measured tones or otherwise? Was this prognosis realised?

School board establishment and early years

This chapter analyses the aftermath of the consultative exercise on the school board proposals including their revision and the Parliamentary debate on the legislation.

The Dumfries and Galloway 'pilot' exercise is reviewed as is the preparation for the initial elections. Comment on the subsequent working of boards is offered as is a view on some of the main 'characters' of the period including Forsyth.

Interviewee perspectives on the introduction of boards and the early years are analysed.

The School Boards Act and subsequent events

9. The School Boards Act and the initial years

9.1 The aftermath of the consultative exercise

Brooksbank and Anderson confirm that the consultative exercise of 1987

... provoked considerable reaction and while the principle of greater parental involvement was unanimously agreed there was virtual unanimous rejection of some of the proposals. Even parents' representatives opposed the concept of parents being given wide ranging executive responsibility. (1989, p.295)

Forsyth had succeeded like no other in bringing an aspect of the parental dimension in education and schooling to the fore although any merit in his specific proposals invariably was ignored or undermined by accusations of the government's "hidden agenda". There had been a national debate of a kind which could be described as disguised professional resistance despite the fact that professional association responses and school staff invariably espoused greater parental involvement.

A less controversial proposal such as a modest and acceptable reform of school councils might have had genuine support through consensus but was Forsyth attempting to achieve consensus or to move matters forward more rapidly because of pressure from Mrs Thatcher and the 'opting out' lobby evident south of the border?

What options were open to him? If he ignored the consultation responses, he threatened to undermine a process which government had developed to allow interested persons access to a form of influence on potential legislation.

The hostility aroused by his proposals required a considered if not ingenious

response if something meaningful was to be salvaged. The educational press was full of speculation. The 'ceiling' powers promoted accusations of going too far and he might usefully abandon these or attempt some pilot arrangement for several years to allow boards to be established with minimum powers on the understanding that this would allow parents to have a degree of experience which large numbers claimed they lacked. A balance had to be struck between modification of the proposals and their emasculation. What powers could be sustained over alternative consultative or 'toothless' processes seemed to be the question Forsyth wrestled with. He could review such proposed powers (cf Appendix 4) as veto over HT appointments while retaining parental participation in the leeting and interviewing process; the 100 pupil rule could be overturned and the desire for every school to have its own board met. The alliance between parents and teachers to the extent their organisations were making common cause was unlikely to continue indefinitely. A bold but listening minister might yet conjure up an acceptable compromise, building on the now accepted notion of greater parental involvement without fuelling anxieties (no matter how disingenuous) about division and threat to the educational fabric.

The chairs of the Catholic Education Commission and the Education Committee of the Church of Scotland in a joint submission perhaps summarised the mood of the times:

We are ready to support any well considered initiative to promote good management in schools, greater accountability on the part of schools to the community, and an enhanced parental participation in educational matters. ...we feel that some of the proposals put forward in the Government's paper go so far beyond the central, and laudable, purpose of effective parental involvement in schools as to ensure a final divisiveness that will do harm to the fabric of our educational system.

Education Alert, the Grampian-based education support group, on 19.11.87 produced its final analysis of 2,439 questionnaires, surveying reactions to the proposals. While 60 per cent of responses still did not want school boards to replace Grampian Region's approach to school and college councils, there was a realisation that government was likely to press ahead with amended proposals and, given this determination, 51 per cent said they would prefer every school to have its own board.

It appeared that the 'ceiling powers' had to be abandoned or conceded if any credibility for the consultative exercise was to be maintained, and when the government issued revised proposals in January 1988 there was emphasis on the government having carefully listened to the messages of the exercise. How true was this claim?

9.2 The government's conclusions and the School Boards Bill

In a booklet entitled *School Management : the Government's Conclusions* (Scottish Office Dd.8103866 1/88), Ministers welcomed "... the wide support for the principle of involving parents and the community more fully in the running of local schools", but suggested that some of the fears in relation to proposed powers of boards were unfounded; yet they had found many of the constructive comments helpful. The principal changes effected by the consultative process were:

- the agreement to provide a board for every school regardless of size;
- the acceptance that 'ceiling powers' had to be removed;
- the waiving of the Secretary of State's right to promote moves towards more power for boards by means of regulation;
- the introduction of an overt accountability function of boards to parents by the statutory duty to report at least annually.

Despite the concept of 'floor' and 'ceiling' powers disappearing, the thrust and substance of the school board proposals remained intact eg the Bill's Schedule 3 on Delegation Orders to take up additional powers over budgetary matters. Unenthusiastic responses from parents inevitably encouraged the government to resile from the extreme reform initially proposed and revisions were designed to calm parents. On *Reporting Scotland* (BBC News), initial concerns and comments were shared with Forsyth by parents, EA elected members and academics. Forsyth claimed greater partnership would result. Emphasis was placed on the changes made in response to the consultation and the fact that boards would now control the pace of their development. There was evidence of different interpretations of the revised proposals eg confirmation by the board of headteacher spending plans and when board views would be sought, pre or post the planning stage. Brodie welcomed the "much more realistic" government proposals which would result in greater "positive contribution and influence and not power" for parents, but sought reassurances about funding for boards and their work and "the opportunity to influence what goes on in their local schools especially in relation to the overlap curriculum, matters of health education, sex education..."

Legislation was expected by October 1988 with boards beginning their duties in the next school year in August 1989. The School Boards (Scotland) Bill [Bill 122] was subsequently published on 16th March 1988, and comprised 20 main clauses dealing with constitution, composition, roles, functions, powers and responsibilities of boards, an additional 4 supplementary clauses and 4 Schedules relating to electoral procedures, appointments of headteachers etc and delegation orders; it contained no major surprises encapsulating the proposals of the January booklet. Jim Martin, by now General Secretary Elect of the EIS, recognised the changes from the August

1987 proposals but highlighted some areas of concern about certain clauses in the Bill. These included:

- the exclusion from boards of parents who are teachers [2. (4)];
- the need for boards to approve headteachers' proposals for 'per capita' spending, which gave them indirect control of the curriculum [9. (2)];
- the arrangements for the appointment of headteachers and deputy and assistant headteachers [11. and Schedule 2];
- the board's powers to be informed of levels of pupil attainment and information about other schools [10. (3)];
- and the boards' control of out-of-hours use of schools. [14.]

The teaching profession would not relate to parents alone on boards, co-opted members were proposed; the chairman of Lothian Region's Education Committee, Councillor Geddes, wished the government to amend its recommendations on the composition of boards by suggesting that non-teaching staff in schools, senior pupils in secondary schools, and the wider public should be represented on the boards. This was consistent with other comments about representation and composition made in 1984 at the time of the school council consultative exercise and endorsed in the 1987 responses. The new Scottish Labour education spokesperson, Norman Hogg, claimed

The School Board proposals were not about improving parental influence over education. They were about shifting power from Education Authorities and then diffusing it across 3,000 schools throughout Scotland. This would have removed clout from the authorities and therefore the central Government's influence in schools would have been enormously increased. The real reason for this was financial and not educational, and the effect would have been to restrict and not increase spending on schools.

(TSES: "The Whipping Boy Fights Back" by Neil Munro, p.6, 18.3.88)

Battlelines were being drawn up for the Parliamentary debates and possible amendments to the Bill. In Strathclyde, the largest authority by far, the issue became clouded by the school closure process involving the single sex schools in Glasgow, Notre Dame High and Our Lady and St Francis Secondary, and Paisley Grammar School which received very high profile support from Mrs Thatcher. Allan Stewart, former minister, and the then Conservative MP for Eastwood, an area which sent many pupils to Paisley Grammar using placing requests through the 1981 legislation, took up the 'opting out' option and proposed such an amendment to the School Boards Bill in support of the school remaining open. Reflecting on the Bill, Dr Malcolm Green, chairman of Strathclyde's Education Committee was clear:

We are no longer talking about parental involvement and that is something to be regretted very much. The Bill is bound to be discussed in the light of opting out rather than being seen as an exercise in parental participation... Opting out has poisoned the whole debate. School boards are a stepping stone to opting out, the Government's goal.

In addition to 'opting-out', which, while not mentioned in the Bill, dominated the Parliamentary debate, dissident Tory backbenchers, Sir Hector Munro and Mr Alick Buchanan-Smith, had some difficulties with issues such as nomenclature of board rather than council, the parental majority, and the possibility of boards raising funds and/or charging fees. All such reservations became evident when the Bill began its Parliamentary passage.

9.3 The Parliamentary debate

On 12 April 1988, Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, introducing the Second Reading of the Bill (Hansard, 12 April 1988, Orders of the Day) claimed the government had been motivated in their proposals by three main considerations (p.30) that:

- the Scottish educational tradition be maintained;
- parents should play a more significant role in the education process which affects their children;
- parents within any community with regard to any school, on the basis of the principle of parental involvement, should adopt executive or advisory responsibilities should only be determined by the parents themselves.

Rifkind speaking against the contention that there was insufficient demand from parents for an extension of their involvement cited remarks made by the 19th century Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston,

If I am told that people are unfit for constitutional government,
then I say the best way to make them fit is to give it to them.

(op cit. p.31)

As Donald Dewar (Labour) subsequently pointed out (*op cit. p.46*) the Palmerston principle of giving the people something they do not wish made a mockery of any consultative process.

Rifkind then clarified the role of school boards by indicating:

...We have never intended to interfere with the professional judgment of teachers... Much that goes on within schools can properly be determined only by those in the teaching profession. However, there are many administrative and ancillary educational matters in which parents should be involved. (*op cit. p.32*)

Important changes had been made to the original proposals as a result of the consultative exercise, and Rifkind quoted several sources to justify the claim that the Bill was widely acceptable including SPTC, and the EIS which had said the Government deserved "credit for responding to public opinion". The

Government could not understand the Opposition's acceptance of the principle of parental involvement but resistance to the practice as represented in the Bill.

Rifkind indicated that the basic functions of the boards were contained in Clauses 8 to 14 of the Bill (*op cit.* p.41). Principally boards would have rights to information especially about the curriculum and teaching and to make representations; a shared involvement in appointments of senior staff and the right to extend their responsibility through an evolutionary process eg by seeking powers over discipline and school rules or determining the format of reporting to parents. The Opposition amendment declining to give a Second reading to the Bill suggested that "only lip-service to the genuine need to encourage parental involvement" was being paid, and then went on to raise the spectre of 'opting out'. Rifkind suggested that perhaps the government's Bill was too timid and that he would welcome amendments to extend the role of parents.

Throughout the debate, the Opposition parties sought to support the principle of increased parental involvement while attacking the Bill; the Conservatives repeatedly pointed out that the opponents of the Bill were not putting forward credible alternatives. When not seeking assurances about 'opting out', the Opposition concentrated on issues such as the "built-in parental majority" (p.48), suggesting that the desirable partnership of pupils, parents and community was not represented in the presenting arrangements; the role of headteachers *vis a vis* boards was unsatisfactory particularly as they had no vote [Rifkind advised that headteacher associations had indicated they did not wish a vote, and the government claimed that they had listened to and accepted such wishes]. The government's backbenchers, as noted above,

had certain concerns. Buchanan-Smith (*op cit.* p.54) highlighted the question of links between secondary and associated primary schools and the possibility of small rural schools coming together to form a joint board (as happens at Primary level in parts of Italy), and suggested that a period of consolidation of the improvements and curricular advances was necessary. He was concerned, as many educationalists were, about imposing "too many changes too swiftly over too short a period of time". (*op cit.* p.55) The opposition charged him with misunderstanding the purpose of the proposed legislation, and Norman Buchan MP (Paisley South, in whose constituency, the furore about Paisley Grammar and its threatened closure was raging) claimed the Bill was not designed to involve communities in education but it was "to create a structure of elected parents who will exercise executive and management functions in a school" (*op cit.* p.56); he was opposed to this, suggesting that a strengthening of PTAs was necessary to enhance not downgrade the role of individual teacher and parent as proposed by the parental majority on a an elected board concerned with management of the school. Buchan recognised that the Bill "paves the way for opting out" (p 58).

The other Tory dissident was Sir Hector Munro (Dumfries); he, while welcoming the Bill (p.61) remained

...to be convinced that the willing parents who give tremendous support to their parent-teacher association will also come forward, week by week, in an executive function.

He also opined that government had underestimated the costs of the projected boards and based his view on figures from the Dumfries and Galloway Education Convener and the work done in relation to the 'pilot boards' there (cf 9.4). Munro too was concerned about the general pace of

educational developments, and particularly uneasy about the role of local elected members in relation to boards and was mindful of the rights of the RC church.

Bill Walker, Conservative, defended the board proposals (p.72) because

... we have not been able to find the right mixture of communication within education where parents are able to communicate effectively and bring about changes within schools that are important for their children.

The principal Opposition arguments included concerns about direct elections in the light of the poor experience of community councils (p.78); that the Bill was not about parental involvement but about an additional tier of management while resources were being cut due to a lack of genuine partnership between local authorities and government (p.82). Tony Worthington (Labour) admitted concerns about the role of the teaching professionals (p.84),

...we should have been encouraging the teaching profession to be much less protective. A secure profession involves other people.

The question of parental majority on the board was viewed as divisive (p.94) and Forsyth was accused of ignoring the consultative responses. It was suggested the Bill was actually an attack on local democracy as expressed through regional councils and an attack on professional competence in schools.

The Bill progressed through Report and Third Reading and several clarifying amendments were made including accepting that a young person could

become a co-opted member of a board eg a senior pupil in a secondary school; entitlement of Regional councillors to attend board meetings; clarification of the term 'parent' to include natural parent, guardians, people who have custody or maintain a child at school. This concern about the nature of 'parent' became something akin to a parlour game when headteachers were preparing electoral rolls prior to the first elections eg because of one labyrinthian series of family relationships, custody etc, it was claimed that technically 6 people might have a right to vote in the election relative to one pupil! No major concessions on the main areas or general thrust of the Bill were made.

The House of Lords considered the second reading of the Bill on 15 July 1988 and again in October and November 1988. The concerns in the Lords mirrored the debate in the Commons particularly worries about the parental majority although this was countered by citing experience in school councils which it was claimed had not benefited from a balanced membership. The Minister of State, Lord Sanderson, when summing up reiterated the purpose of the parent majority which was fundamental to the Bill viz it was viewed as a counterweight to the dominance of the teaching profession in the so-called partnership with parents. It was claimed the "partnership of purpose" would be at risk if there were no parental majority and parents would drift further to the margins of education. It was claimed that boards would result in "genuine participation for parents and the wider community".

When the Act was passed much remained to be done within local authorities, within the teaching profession and in the community at large to prepare for boards. Training programmes and information were high on the government's list. Some lessons might also be learned from the limited 'pilot' exercise

based on a proposal from Dumfries and Galloway which Forsyth agreed to part fund.

9.4 Pilot School Boards

In mid 1988, Dumfries and Galloway established a 'pilot' board experiment in seven schools representing the range of provision within the authority while the formal legislation was being debated. Fordyce in his interview described a meeting he and his chairperson had with Forsyth.

... I said, 'These School Boards are going to cost money'. And, before Betty Smith could answer, he said 'How much?' And I said £50,000 right off the top of my head. 'Oh, it's a lot of money', he said... So he promised £25,000. He was and is a good politician but quite a pragmatic man, I think he planned it very carefully, and he handled it exceptionally well.

The Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) was commissioned to evaluate these 'pilot' boards. (Munn and Brown, February, 1989; Munn and Holroyd, September, 1989). The initial SCRE report *First Impressions* concluded that the pilot scheme had:

- demonstrated parental interest in boards;
- involved competitive elections;
- increased parental awareness of boards and their role but only in a limited way;
- introduced focused and successful induction and training;
- established regular meetings of boards;
- encouraged local authority systems to be geared to meet board requests for information such as education expenditure.

Aside from the concerns about the social composition of the boards where

semi and unskilled workers were largely unrepresented, the most worrying feature of the SCRE data was:

...that parents feel that boards are achieving nothing, and are going nowhere... if this feeling persists it will discourage parents from standing for election and indeed make it difficult for boards to find people willing to be co-opted. (*First Impressions* , p.20)

The second report concluded that the parents of pupils attending the 'pilot' boards had been no more involved in their children's schooling than they were before. The 38 board members who responded to a questionnaire from SCRE said their success in provoking a response from parents had been disappointing. Members were so disillusioned with the amount of time and domestic pressures involved in contributing to boards' activities that only five of the 23 parents and teachers who replied to the questionnaire said they definitely intended to stand for election to the statutory boards. Such findings were played down by Ian Lang, Education Minister, who had replaced Forsyth by that time. Lang welcomed the interest and commitment shown and promised lessons would be learned for the training and information provision for the official boards. Only two of the members interviewed wanted the boards to take on additional powers and contrary to articulated concerns some teachers and heads would have liked the boards to take more interest in the curriculum whereas parents and co-opted members preferred to leave this to the professionals. The report commented:

It would be a pity if teachers failed to capitalize on parents' trust in their professional expertise so that a real partnership could not be achieved.

Partnership had not materialised and despite the awkward co-operation and

reasonable atmosphere at board meetings, there was a tendency for a 'them and us' approach between professionals and parents. The low profile of teachers on the 'pilot' boards was an indication of the national stance of non-cooperation by the EIS, but also because initial board meetings focused on issues and induction which presumably teachers were familiar with but which parents were learning about; additionally there was some indication of concerns about loyalty to employers ie the education authority. Perhaps professionals felt unable to criticise their employers or policies and they may have been defensive in posture if not attitude. This concern about the role of the board and perceived rights over teachers is most evident in the Scottish Office video *The Headteacher and the School Board* (1989) produced for the headteacher module (MTHT) on school boards. The Video Guide offered key points and advice such as:

The headteacher is the principal professional adviser to the School Board.

The headteacher is required to provide the Board with information and reports including, for example, school policy statements on specific issues, an annual report, and details of the arrangements for consultation between parents and teachers.

The headteacher, in addition to providing advice to the Board, also receives advice on behalf of the school senior management team. (A4)

The headteacher of a 'pilot' secondary school board was at great pains on film to describe the tensions in any relationship between himself, the board and his employer. It could be suggested that this is also a good reason for headteachers not to have a vote on the school board. It was this same video which was cited by Walter Beveridge former Depute Senior Chief of the Inspectorate in his interview as being instrumental in allaying the concerns of

headteachers in particular about boards being bodies which would usurp the management role and function of the head.

Suspicion and concerns existed because professionals, who had for so long dominated education and schooling, perceived their ascendant position as being threatened by parents and the in-built majority on boards - the portents for effective partnership were not good. This is unsurprising and understandable in a new venture and only through time, working together purposefully can mutual understanding, trust and respect be developed.

The experimental boards had three priority areas:

- communicating with parents,
- having a greater understanding of finance
- having a greater understanding of educational practice.

No advice is offered by the researchers, however, about why board members should have a greater understanding of such matters. The report stated that pilot boards felt their most tangible achievements lay in supporting their school - and in refurbishing it - and in having a greater understanding of the school as well as of teaching. Education authorities would have to be ready to meet the significant demand for information from the boards - and to provide it swiftly and effectively. The indications from Dumfries and Galloway were that there was much preparation necessary to provide for boards and to encourage potential participants - both parents and teachers - that this was a worthwhile exercise in which to be involved.

9.5 After the Act: preparation for boards and the first elections

Much remained to be put in place when the Act was passed. Two main purposes were identified by the government in a paper circulated to education authorities in September 1988 while the Bill was still progressing through Parliament (School Boards: Information and Training; SMA244F1):

- to inform the public about the opportunities in the new legislation
- to encourage interest and participation in the new school boards.

Various leaflets eg '*School Boards Who? Why? What? When? How?*' and '*Training for School Boards*' were widely circulated. Beveridge, when interviewed, affirmed the Department had recognised the "considerable antipathy to school boards across the country" and this provided the rationale for the advertising and public relations campaign designed to encourage sufficient parents to stand in elections,

...We decided to go ahead with a large amount of training and advertising about School Boards and other ways of facilitating their introduction... before the formal establishment of boards, approximately two-thirds of people in the general population felt that it was a good idea so, either we had not done this scientifically enough to start with, or else the attitude had changed quite a bit...

Of course Forsyth's proposals and subsequent Bill had led many parents to believe that 'unrepresentative' people would be elected or there would be a move towards 'opting out'. Many candidates therefore who finally emerged stood not to support something but from a negative viewpoint attempting to ensure a worse fate did not occur. Concerns were also expressed about people standing for boards who were already familiar with the role and

functions of governing bodies in England (cf discussion of developments in Chapter 6).

... a lot of people in the early days came on boards to stop things happening rather than to promote certain things. They are particularly keen to avoid any lurch to 'opting out' and that was at one end. The other was to make sure that the board's were not "full of these English upstarts" so it was to prevent things rather than to promote them.

(Interview with P. Munn)

Various bodies were conscious of the need to raise their profile, to encourage particular forms of representation and to devise 'fair' procedures so that candidates were not disadvantaged eg

In common with the STUC, the Church of Scotland is urging its "well-informed members" to stand for election to school boards - or "offer themselves for service... the Church accepts that "parent power" has come to stay but regrets that it was not introduced by more balanced legislation to achieve partnership between parents, teachers and the community.

(TSES: Kirk appeals for school board missionaries, p.A10, 28.4.89)

Members of school boards should at least be able to write. However, Central Region is taking no chances that candidates will slip in the extra word or two and blind constituents with the force and length of their argument. They have devised a two-page A4 form lined off into exactly 250 boxes and demand that candidates fill it up by placing one word in each box to complete their statement. (Letter from Roy Robertson, Bridge of Allan to TSES: p.9, 22.9.89)

Initial elections were scheduled for autumn 1989, and while the profile of

parents had been raised by the consultation on the board proposals and the Parliamentary debate, much still rested on the extent of support for boards at election time. Events leading up to the initial elections and establishment of boards were not straightforward as resistance continued; the EIS offered advice to their headteacher members in Strathclyde, in August 1989, not to participate in preparation for the elections, including establishing the electoral rolls, because they were being asked to take up tasks which properly should be done by administrative staff.

There were fears that the publicity campaign referred to above had failed to get the messages across:

The Scottish Parent Teacher Council claims parents and teachers are still poorly informed about school boards- a week before the final closing date for the electoral rolls. Those not on the roll will not be able to vote or stand for election... As a result it has sent a basic leaflet on the boards to all schools this week, asking heads to photocopy it for distribution to as many teachers and parents as possible. "Schools and parents will get the board they deserve."
(TSES: p.3, 1.9.89)

By mid-September 1989 the deadline for nominations for the school board elections had passed. The situation in Strathclyde was that a third of schools would not have a board, while a third would automatically have a board because nominations matched available places. In Dumfries and Galloway, where there had been a pilot experience as described above, the indications were that 50% of their schools would not have boards. The degree of parental interest and enthusiasm is evident in such figures. My own personal experience involved being telephoned by the headteacher of my daughter's

school to request that I nominate myself. All the initial members of that first board for her school were returned unopposed! Such experience, I believe, was not uncommon:

I think that many people are elected to boards without having any idea about what a board does or why they should be on the board or why the school should have a board. In the first round of elections, people stood for boards with the prime intention of preventing the school from opting-out.

(Interview with J Gillespie)

Across the country apathy was endemic despite the concerns about unrepresentative people becoming board members. The educational press speculated about such apathy and offered a raft of reasons and implications of lack of parental take-up (TSES: 22.9.89). Perhaps the 'electorate' thought there was no need to disturb their school, being content with provision and approach to parents and their wishes and needs? The government's attempt to create choice and diversity through the device of school boards at least looked like succeeding but not necessarily in the way envisioned. The emphasis on parents was important, while boards could be established without teacher members or co-optees, they simply could not exist without parent members. Post October 1989 there were schools with elected boards, schools with boards returned unopposed, schools without boards and facing re-runs of the elections, schools with no board and probably no hope of a board given parental reaction; in areas where limited interest existed the legislation militated against a board forming because of the insistence on a parental majority. If there was scope to have boards without a parental majority and if fears about role and function had been properly allayed, perhaps the process would have produced more contested elections?

The initial elections resulted in boards being formed in 1,720 schools out of 2,799 in 10 education authorities. 641 were elected without a contest because the number of parental nominations equalled the seats available (TSES, 29.9.89). Frank Pignatelli, Director of Education in Strathclyde, in October 1989 stated that there would be:

... elections in around 500 Strathclyde schools (42 per cent). In some 340 schools (29 per cent) insufficient numbers of parents came forward to boards to be formed and efforts will be made to have further elections later in the year.

(Catholic Observer: 'Will School Boards truly represent the wishes of the parents generally?')

A more worrying statistic for Pignatelli was that in 340 schools parent nominees exactly matched the number of places required to form boards without elections. Lang was quoted as saying the national picture was "a remarkably good start for a system getting under way". By February 1990, the second round of elections had enhanced the position and some 80% of schools had school boards following the closure of parent nominations. This was undoubtedly encouraging for the government as the October 1989 elections had resulted in only 60 per cent of primaries, 80 per cent of secondaries and 32 per cent of special schools having established boards. The number of contested elections was disappointing but initially a number of schools felt it necessary to have a board rather than none, so nominations were unofficially encouraged by headteachers as evidenced above. What the boards would do in their first years of existence would determine the degree of continuing support.

9.6 Participation in boards

In October 1993, elections still did not attract enough parents to create electoral contests; in Fife, 133 nominations for 170 parent places materialised, while in Strathclyde 450 schools from 1,000 had bye-elections. Parent spokespersons such as Judith Gillespie and Anne Hill, President of the Scottish School Boards Association, suggested parents were sorting things out themselves or had rejected the formal structure of boards while still retaining their interest in their child's education. It was claimed that elections put people off and if they were abandoned there would be a higher level of parental participation. (TESS, 22.10.93)

The White Paper *Raising the Standard* (January, 1997) highlighted the 1996 election results which meant that boards were "well established" in a large percentage of Scottish schools:

primary schools	75%
secondary schools	94%
special schools	52%

It appears that Boards are well established as part of the structures surrounding schooling. What boards commonly do may be less clear.

9.7 The subsequent workings of school boards

In 1990 Lothian Parents' Action Group surveyed their newly established Boards (Boards' Eye View Survey). The replies indicated that generally

- primary school boards had a majority of women members but male chairpersons;
- co-optees were church representatives or someone who was professionally involved in education;

- meetings were every six weeks;
- initial business concentrated on establishment, training and budget;
- concerns were about furthering communication with parents and the state of school buildings;
- no interest in fund-raising was evident;
- good relations with headteachers and PTAs had been established;
- members were enjoying the experience and had gained from greater awareness of the school and the education system.
- Regions found themselves under pressure particularly with respect to repairs and state of buildings because parents felt they were unable to comment meaningfully on aspects of the curriculum.

Thompson (TESS: *As the minutes tick by*, p.18, 25.1.91) reported his small-scale study of 25 Glasgow boards which involved an analysis of approved minutes of meetings, observation of boards and three detailed case-study boards. The issues dealt with by the boards, and actions resulting confirmed the Lothian experience. In their first year of operation most time was spent on procedural matters concerned with establishing office-bearers and the board's work pattern although variations were evident ranging from procedural matters dominating in 68% of boards to being peripheral in 5% of his sample. Home-school relations was the second most important theme for boards where 12% of board time was devoted to contacting parents and establishing links with PA/PTAs. There was a limited commitment to the principle of local democracy in action; some boards being involved and innovative in promoting home-school contacts, while others were discouraged by the apathy of their constituents, who seldom attended meetings or replied to board communications. 11% of board time was devoted to educational issues, but few took meaningful action with regard to

curriculum, assessment and teaching approaches. Most boards occupied themselves with less contentious issues such as extracurricular activities. Minor concerns dominated and there was great variation in board interpretations of purposes, aims and objectives. Concerns about buildings, lack of resources, and the delay in filling senior posts were common. Thomson concluded that it was vitally important that boards crystallise their aims and objectives and if boards were to do more than simply occupy their time on a board night, boards must work together (and with others) to clarify their purposes and to produce strategies which would involve them in more important areas of school work.

The government too was interested in how school boards had taken to their task and also how the training which had been provided was helping boards to become fully functional. Research was commissioned to evaluate the training and SCRE carried this out (Arney *et al.*, 1992). The progress of school boards in their first two years was charted by a study conducted by the MVA Consultancy and researchers from Jordanhill College, John MacBeath and Bill Thomson. This involved a postal survey of a random sample of 200 schools, telephone interviews with non-parent members and 20 case study boards for more in-depth investigation; the findings were published as 'Making School Boards Work' (1992). The report summarised achievements and covered areas such as:

- *Becoming a board member* confirming some of the pre-board fears about the wrong kind of people putting themselves forward but the evidence suggested that other parents had taken steps to minimise such circumstances: "To talk of opting out appeared to be the surest guarantee of not getting elected." (p.4).
- *What boards can do* still dominated boards some three years after

establishment (p.11). "Ambiguity of role and function" was the principal reason for failure of boards to survive. Powers of boards were not wide-ranging and in practice proved less than engaging with the exception of appointments of senior staff which was felt to be their most important function. There was suspicion about the EA when information was requested; this brought apparent evasion or "was frequently seen as voluminous and unduly glossy". Reference was made to lack of involvement in school inspections and this was subsequently changed but some experience with this still brought frustration eg as my interview with Steele illustrated; despite advising HMI of a problem area she stated, "When I read their report there wasn't one word that you could have picked out that showed that there was a weak point".

- *Roles for the board* was a recurrent theme for all categories of membership (pp.27-32) and was categorised as support, consultancy or management and policy-setting. The **support** ranged from a minimalist 'rubber stamping' of the head's decisions to "more open discussion" because the implicit support of boards for heads had been established. Boards offered **consultancy** when acting as a sounding board and there was evidence of influencing through open discussion "established practices" in areas such as "playground supervision, safety and transport measures, school prizegivings" etc. There was evidence of frustration at not being allowed to discuss areas in which it was not allowed to venture particularly in relation to individual teachers (again echoed in Steele's interview). With regard to **management and policy-setting**, only a limited number of boards (usually with strong chairpersons) and members believed they were "playing a significant overt and positive role as initiators in policy setting and in managing the

school". This was not the view of heads in most schools who claimed they were trying to involve members in areas such as long-term planning and development. Members believed they played a key role in appointment of new headteachers and that this would inevitably have "a major effect on policy and practice".

- *Relationship with PTA* varied (pp.32-33); the PTA was often the "dominant influence". PTAs had initially provided large numbers of board members and the existence of a PTA in many of the case study schools contributed to the "Board's difficulty in finding itself a role". The PTA often had more status and power and this was encouraged by a number of headteachers. While there was little evidence of resentment or conflict between boards and PTAs, it was suggested that "PTAs and PAs appear to have been an influential factor in the functioning of Boards, and in the way Boards have defined their roles".
- *Relationships with headteachers* were important (pp.47-53); some 25% of the case study boards had high profile headteachers who dominated and inhibited boards including teacher members. Some of these headteachers were supportive of boards but were unaware of "how their own impact or presence affected the Board". Low profile heads were more typical and the process of SOED provided board training was cited as being instrumental in "demystifying, or democratising, the head". In some boards, strong chairpersons, took centre stage, but boards needed information and support from heads and welcomed those who presented information in a way which allowed the board to make sense of it, thus "positive support + low profile seemed to be the most successful combination for the headteacher role", but it was

recognised that some of those ebullient heads had "kept their Boards alive when they were in danger of dying".

- *The representativeness of board members.* was an issue raised by members; the survey confirmed that membership was largely drawn from social classes A, B and C, while teachers formed the largest occupational group on boards and one board had four parent members, a co-opted member who were teachers in addition to the staff members. There were indications that those parents who had become members because they took the broader view rather than the narrow focus of interest in one's own child.

The report concludes that a clear majority of board members had a positive and enjoyable experience, many thinking their contribution had been productive. This optimistic assessment was not shared by teacher members but a balanced viewpoint may have been difficult to achieve as parties found ways of coming to terms with each other and to dispel the suspicions which clearly existed.

9.8 What of the characters and actors of the period?

In this history there have been major shapers of events and none more so than Michael Forsyth. Of the other important players, one might include Fred Forrester of the EIS and several activist parents such as Judith Gillespie or Diana Daly although their public profiles were enhanced by the degree of press coverage of their activities and their influence may therefore have been exaggerated while David Brodie, chair of the SPTC, had a much less public style of operating, but made no less of a contribution, certainly with respect to the final outcomes, while perhaps having little impact on the public debate.

Forrester has been a main spokesperson for the EIS, the leading teacher interest group, since becoming Depute Secretary; he is often in demand by the media for comment on a range of educational issues and is usually good 'copy'. Given the prompt of the English 1986 Education Bill, was he prescient or justly speculative having entered the arena which eventually became the school boards controversy as early as 1986 (as noted on p.xx) by proposing parental involvement at national level would be more advantageous than participation in school councils or at individual school level? Well-primed perhaps by the views previously developed in the response to the school council consultative exercise when the EIS insisted that Scotland had no tradition of governing bodies and there was no measurable demand but expressed worries about representation and the difficulties of getting parents to serve; the possible deleterious effect on PAs and PTAs if school councils were revamped was mentioned but stress was laid on the value of voluntary bodies. It could be claimed that the EIS, and principally Forrester, juggled with a range of important concepts with a view to safeguarding professional autonomy if not primacy in Scottish educational matters eg the official EIS response said "Reforms in this area must be based on the criteria of meeting legitimate parental demands while maintaining the quality of the service, which is founded on professionalism."

When school boards were proposed Forrester appealed to Scottishness as opposed to what was happening in England. He raised the red herring of 'opting out' (taken up by so many others), amplified the contention that education was under-resourced, promoted the received wisdom that teacher professionalism would ensure a proper and appropriate role for parents (presumably determined by teachers) and which the EIS was purposefully pursuing. Forrester had been instrumental in developing the EIS campaign

and responsibilities but also broadening out to a range of educational concerns and campaigns such as performance indicators and national testing which she felt were issues which boards ought to concern themselves with. Articulate and opinionated in the sense that she took a view of some kind on most matters, Gillespie has had a wide experience of boards and has tried to make them work; in my interview with her she claimed that parents are supportive of boards but that boards have not done what Forsyth originally intended ie to become boards of management, rather they are forums for discussion. The interview provided an example of a highly competent and forceful chairperson; such persons are evident on some boards who while they offer support are unafraid to challenge or express an opinion; the extent to which such persons overshadow other board members is possibly worthy of further research allied to an investigation of ways in which more board members might generally become more assertive and imbued with positive self-esteem.

David Brodie, also worked unceasingly, representing parent interests on SPTC for a long period of time. He was chairman of Council during the 1987-88 period and his interview revealed elements of the strategy adopted by SPTC. Given his position and the access to government that provided, he was undoubtedly influential, yet the degree to which he influenced events is difficult to assess; when interviewed by me, he confirmed that there had been a close liaison between SPTC and the Scottish Office throughout the period much of it behind the scenes eg Malcolm Rifkind, the Secretary of State privately asked his views on 'opting out'. He pursued particular objectives including the parental majority on boards believing "that a parent majority did serve to make the point that this was not a 'talking shop' and that parents were for real as opposed to people to be put up with". Brodie admitted that

such a message and desire was difficult to 'sell' to the general public and agreed that " most parents in Scotland would have been happy with a 50-50 scenario", but he persevered despite affirming "that the parent majority was probably more symbolic than anything" while recognising that there "was a down side to that as well because it probably switched off the profession... certainly the Teachers' Unions saw it as a potential threat to their power".

Brodie's view of Forsyth's strategy is interesting, recognising the provocative nature of the initial proposals which Brodie nevertheless welcomed and took advantage of

for parents and SPTC... one body per school and to focus on that and say, 'We want it. We will try and sort out the details of it and try to make it more effective'. I believed then and still believe now that we were right to attempt to try and lead public opinion down the road of saying 'Yes' to all this because the basic underlying need was to establish one body per school: representative of teachers, parents and the community and not necessarily in that order.

Based on close association on the school boards matter, Brodie offered insights into Forsyth's political objectives and ambitions believing that "there probably was a genuine desire to extend the wider community influence on schools in addition to parents" but that "there was undoubtedly... an objective to reduce the power of the Local Authorities through the development of School Boards over time" combined with a government realisation "that there was a parental dimension to tap into." This was negative in the sense that the government appeared to have a perception of the "influence of the Teacher Unions in Scotland as far too great and maybe saw the development of School Boards as an opportunity to reduce that." The dominance of

professionals was to be challenged if not overturned by lay participants via school boards. Despite government emphasis on consumerism and hence the board proposals, Brodie believed "parents had much more to contribute as co-educators of their children" but that the government never viewed the "parental contribution in the same positive educational way that we [SPTC] did."

When boards materialised, Brodie was unsuccessful in changing the SPTC constitution to accommodate board membership. He asserted that SPTC had become more politicised and concerned about the alienation of teachers which resulted in a refusal to cooperate on the issue of boards. Another problem he identified "was the nature of some of the personalities involved. They kept falling out with each other". If it had been left to Brodie there would only have been one body and "it would have been SPTC and we would have developed that. It would have to have been a more federal structure but they failed to take the opportunity and I failed to persuade them". He envisaged a "Scottish Parent Council" inclusive of board members, which if it had emerged, in his opinion, might have deterred some of the individual excesses of persons more interested in personal gain through television appearances etc and avoided the disagreements which emerged between SPTC and the School Boards Association. Brodie, no longer having children of school age and moving to new employment in England, faded from the scene as all parents must do. His background influence contributed a legacy of a parental majority on boards, satisfying his views and beliefs (he did indicate at the time of the proposals that he thought it would rarely if ever be exercised); in that to date he appears to have been correct in his prediction and he merits admiration for his trustee type behaviour (cf pp.77-79) in pursuing such an objective in the face of collective opposition.

Michael Forsyth the progenitor of boards demands further reflection. Instrumental in bringing forward radical proposals which reflected his political ideology and values and resonated with developments in England and Wales; he was a conviction politician and did not flinch in the face of universal hostility. This was either foolishness, bravery or disdain for the lack of appreciation of Thatcherite ideals in Scotland. In a range of other policy issues, such as 5-14 curriculum development and national testing, Forsyth demonstrated similar fortitude and resolution against the forces of opinion deriding the proposals and forecasting doom but ultimately in several areas he was apparently forced to compromise perhaps because he underestimated the degree of resistance which would greet his proposals. I believe he initiated a consultation exercise from which he managed to salvage his underlying intentions almost intact by careful framing of the legislation. There were times when key aims were put at risk eg he undoubtedly believed that parents should have greater involvement in schools, but any enhanced participation was endangered with the interpretation that this would require a management role for parents. The possibilities of genuine and meaningful partnership (as yet unrealised) between parents and professionals, however, were afforded a setback by his insistence on a parental majority viewed as inherently undemocratic and against any notion or spirit of partnership which still causes resentment with teacher leaders. He seriously underestimated parental desires and failed to capture their enthusiasm as consumers via the board initiative; this was partly because parents are such a disparate group but also I would contend because of resistance to Thatcherism ingrained in the Scottish psyche and also partly through the wretched inability of many Scots to do little but to defer to authority.

I regret that Forsyth was unable to have the time to be interviewed by me because he might have illuminated a range of areas such as whether there was a blueprint for the reform of school councils, prepared in the wake of the 1984 consultative exercise waiting when he took up his ministerial post, or was it, as MacKenzie (1988, p.12) suggests, that the GU Report offered academic respectability for aspects of his school board proposals; his relationships with officials and how they helped or hindered progress on boards eg there is the anecdote that the extended deadline for responses to the board proposals was to allow more time for officials to frame a Bill from ideas sketched on the back of an envelope; his views on the period of the consultation process and its results; his thoughts on the subsequent development and success or failure of boards; his verdict on his legacy for Scottish education. Will it be his personality and drive, his politics and ideology, his proposals or the process of engaging ruthlessly with the existing policy community whose response was feeble which he will be remembered by? He remains a complex person and politician. His forceful approach, not only in relation to school boards, combined with impatience and eagerness for change alienated many people, some who were perhaps natural Conservative sympathisers who may have preferred gradualist development; this was clear in a number of the consultative exercise responses when there were appeals to Mr Rifkind to take him in hand. Forsyth stirred up the Scottish educational establishment in addition to the rank and file and the grandees of his own party and repeatedly wrong-footed his opponents by the swiftness of his response, by his initiative and his grasp of the details. Humes (1995; 1997) has assessed his influence on educational policy-making especially in relation to the curricular initiatives Forsyth was associated with and proposed (1995, p.127) that Forsyth's strong political will, ideological zeal and management drive transformed "the educational policy agenda";

that there was little intellectual resistance to Forsyth's "ideological onslaught"; and that his school board reforms allied with local government reform could yet lead to further developments to release "school and parents from self-serving officials". I have difficulty with this final conclusion although I agree it is a possibility and expand upon the idea in my concluding chapter; unless there is a forceful politician around to move boards into a particular role then I envisage little further development on a national scale; that does not preclude local isolated initiatives but it is difficult to see who would lead these, the professionals, perhaps even for altruistic reasons?

9.9 Perspectives from interviewees on the first few years of boards

Several interviewees had first-hand experience of the first few years of boards.

- **Boards and their purposes**

Interviewees directly or indirectly identified a number of possible purposes for boards:

- accountability/checking mechanism at local level plus references to a range of purposes fully discussed in his book *School Boards: From Purpose to Practice* (Chapter 2) (Macbeth)
- providing a recognisable management entity for the school (Beveridge)
- supporting the school and providing a sounding board for the head teacher (Munn; McIntyre)
- being a local forum for involvement with one school not several (MacBeath)
- representing the parent interest in educational matters (Dignan; Beveridge)
- ensuring a proper channel of communication between school and parents and having an input to key decisions about what is happening

in that school (Dignan and McIntyre)

- extending to the community awareness of the role that the school has to play within that community (Dignan; Beveridge)
- being consultative bodies (McNeil)
- providing the prerequisite of an elected body with a parental majority to initiate 'opting out' (Forrester)
- influencing the headteacher and the management of the school (Brodie)
- being a management tool to be used by the headteacher and the local community (Brodie).

Clearly there is a range of possible purposes and little agreement about which should be applicable. The range of possible purposes for school boards was the starting point of a book by Macbeth (1990) and in interview he surmised events in England may have prompted activity in the Scottish Office

... the government was beginning to move towards a policy of simulated market forces which, in England, took the form of legislation in 1988 (the ERA)... Some form of local checking mechanism on schools was integral to these developments. In England, the devolved decision-making was to governing bodies and that must have set thinking going in the Scottish Office.

Macbeth's work on purposes has been influential. Fordyce, while recognising Macbeth's contribution, had doubts about the practical grounding of Macbeth's analysis,

... he was trying to create a construct, if you like that suited his perceptions of what the Act was all about. That's fine if he wants to do it that way but I don't think it has any place in the real world.

Fordyce was adamant that individual schools should determine their purpose(s). So far no disagreement with Macbeth, but Fordyce suggested that

... the school board, that particular group of people at any one time, should decide what their purpose is, and to try to do anything else to persuade them to act in any different way was (a) artificial and (b) interfering.

Determination from a position of ignorance can often be inadequate. It makes little practical sense to me to keep people ill-informed. Their potential contribution is fettered from the outset and this 'mushroom management' style in the name of administrative and/or philosophical purity so that thought remains untainted seems paternalistic rather than offering freedom to consider the possibilities. It echoes concerns expressed by Smith that somehow parents are perceived as inadequate and not up to the task. Combined with Forrester's observation about the "deference to authority" evident in Scotland, it suggests that parents who despite asking questions about purposes may be content to operate at a level of activity commensurate with the information and advice afforded to them. Their potential may never be realised because they have had little exposure to alternative advice to inform their views and subsequent actions.

Opinions differed on how aware board members are about purposes. MacBeath claimed that,

Nobody has really told school board members in any kind of sense, which they can get a grip on, what the role is and what they are supposed to be there for... People came to a school board with even no real understanding of what the board was there for, or a very limited understanding of its role.

His "research seemed to suggest that a majority of school board members had never read any literature on school boards" and as boards renew their members through elections there is little sign of review of why they are on boards; this is referred to as a form of drift by Dignan. MacBeath did cite successful use of the original training materials for boards through which members could discuss the purposes of the board, examining such questions as 'what is the School Board here for?' and so providing an "impetus or catalyst to get school board members to look at possible roles for the school board".

Forrester suggested that the Conservative government had done more than enough by pushing the 'opting out' philosophy but local authorities little. Gillespie confirmed that many board members initially stood on a no 'opting out' platform, but also suggested that the management role and purpose of boards was rejected,

I often know that people stand on boards because they don't stand for board control and boards become controlled not a threat to headteachers.

She continued,

The majority of people on boards do not know why they are there; there are a few who go over the cliff at first and they get very frustrated because they cannot achieve any purpose and they get really annoyed with the system and really angry. It is frustrating being on a board and not knowing what you can do. It is actually a much happier position to have no expectations because then, anything that you manage to achieve is a bonus.

MacBeath and Munn, from their research perspectives, were clear that "it is

difficult to know to what extent School Board members are aware of purposes" (MacBeath) given the events surrounding the initial establishment of boards. Munn believed that "a lot of people in the early days came on boards to stop things happening rather than to promote certain things". Such initial negativism may have dissipated through direct experience of boards but it is difficult to judge. From the outset there is little evidence of boards being encouraged by government or education authorities to explore possible purposes. Dignan did not think that too many boards have attempted to clarify their purposes despite "all the efforts that one has made to try to encourage them and I think also you get this because it didn't happen right at the beginning." She also suggested that there was "over-concentration on the structural issues of boards" and roles and functions as outlined in the legislation. McNeill, who worked in Strathclyde, an authority which initially decided to leave training to the Colleges of Education (a decision which he thinks was a tactical error), agreed with MacBeath about the potential benefit and influence of training particularly about purposes,

... Training would probably have gone some way to highlighting purposes of Boards and what Boards might or might not do. It might have eliminated all the questions of 'Can we talk about the curriculum?' or 'Can we not talk about the curriculum?'

Macbeth was concerned about aspects of the official training materials particularly on "the facility to discuss issues or make representations". He suggested that there remains confusion at official and parental level about members' rights on such matters eg

There is a common but false view that such rights do not apply to curricular or staffing matters and the SSBA even advised its members along those lines. I saw this in an SSBA newsletter and I

phoned Anne Hill; she indicated that the SB Support Unit in the Scottish Office had advised her so.

There were clear differences of view among the interviewees about the nature, content, omissions, emphases and potential of training for members. The participant reaction to training was largely negative (Arney, *et al.*) because of its nature and scope and there is little evidence of overt concerns about purposes in the training materials (O'Brien, 1990), but their intended approach if appropriately accessed would have encouraged dialogue and debate which might have gone some way to answer the question "Why are we here?" Much may yet have depended on the commitment and attitude of headteachers and others who may have led training sessions particularly within schools.

- **Board members' relationship with headteachers**

Several of the parent board members interviewed agreed there was a widespread reliance on and trust in headteachers to the extent that board members would be largely receptive to and influenced by the headteacher. Gillespie felt this would be true in many schools but that in some middle-class schools the head would be "closely questioned about policies and positions", she proposed this might only be "true in large schools". Hill offered an insight into the developing empowerment of board members through the work of SSBA with respect to official documents and reports saying that the Association reported on such documentation using plain language and extracted the important points particularly those on which the board should form an opinion.

Steele, however, stated bluntly that certain issues pertaining to problematic staff often needed to be considered seriously despite teachers 'closing ranks'

and not being prepared to take such issues on. In her specific instance she advised that "The difficulties were not addressed even by HMI inspection." Her sentiment was summarised as "Out in the open is better than rotting underneath." The reluctance to engage in difficult matters from either teacher or parent perspective is unsurprising. Notions about conflict resolution being a positive force for growth and development are not yet well developed in a variety of educational contexts; despite the significant programme of educational management training conducted nationwide for several years, challenge may often be interpreted as aggression even within professional school management teams. Even experienced and well informed educationalists found it very difficult "to undermine or question the authority of the primary school headteacher" (MacBeath). The question for board members and their relationship with heads was,

How do you actually confront that without undermining that person in front of the whole group of parents and members of her own staff?

MacBeath's research offered some insights into the difficulties board members face with responses such as:

'Well it is very difficult (a) because you don't have the knowledge, (b) you don't have the background experience and (c) that person has a very strong personality, and you have to have an extremely strong personality and know your stuff to be able to challenge them, and, as well as that, that person's self-identity is so wrapped up with the school. 'I am the school, it is my school', and any kind of challenge to that authority meant that you went into this very unpleasant tension/friction/confrontation, which most people don't want unless you are a person who works in that arena all the time like some business people.

MacBeath also commented on English school governors in the light of his work and experience there, despite greater statutory powers and responsibilities, parent governors find it difficult too.

Equally true, I do a lot of work with Governors in England and the Governor situation is exactly the same. You will find exactly the same issues as we were identifying in the School Boards up here, except down there it is Governors...

Forrester encapsulated the situation since the establishment of boards,

If Michael Forsyth was looking for rebellious School Boards, he hasn't got them.

He then described the board member/headteacher relationship thus

The Headteacher brings before them the issues concerned with their statutory powers and the Headteacher will not tend to bring up other matters. My experience is that very few Boards make representations about other matters. Are they uncritical of the reports of the Headteacher? Yes, I think that is true. The large majority accept the views of the Headteacher. It is part of the general background of Scottish Education that teachers are held in high regard and Headteachers often in very high regard by the parent body.

Pamela Munn's research continues to provide evidence of "the strong parental trust in expertise" offered by teachers and particularly headteachers, thus supporting the comments above. This is echoed by a number of the other interviewees who affirmed her contention that "parents were predisposed to accept what headteachers had to tell them." This was especially so in relation to boards given the uncertainty surrounding what

boards were there for and what specifically they were supposed to do. Hill cited the first elections after the two year initial establishment period when "we had lost a fair number of School Boards" because of "the lack of local authority support for the School Board", and "the lack of power. People who went in there thinking 'I am going to run this school. I am going to rule it, it is going to be mine. I am going to dominate the Headteacher.' It did not happen." This might suggest that headteachers were particularly adept at dealing with these boards. Many board members will have been apprehensive, ill-informed despite information campaigns and training provision, perhaps they came enthused and ready for a role and function which was skilfully denied them or for a role which patently did not exist in terms of power and authority on issues of substance and decision-making? Headteachers were subject to a nationally provided training module (cf. discussion on p. 273); this provision was carefully geared towards awareness of the legislation and the duties and responsibilities of heads and included sessions where they shared possible approaches to providing reports on curricular and assessment issues for example. Clearly there was no national conspiracy to equip headteachers to deal in any specific way, other than professional, with boards. The fact that they were headteachers and were used to authority may have prepared them to relate to boards or assert their position as they might do in relation to other groups.

Munn had a different perspective from Forrester on headteacher approaches; headteachers " played a very clever role" being skilful in their presentation of information to boards;

... the way in which it was presented wasn't a kind of stimulus to discussion, e.g. normally papers would be tabled at Board Meetings - so they weren't circulated in advance and the Head

would talk to a paper which, for all that it was clear enough, would still be a little daunting even to well informed Board members. And there has been hardly any questioning of Heads. I observed a Board which had members of the HMI and Professors on it and even there, the Head gave a very articulate spiel. 'Any questions?' None.

This description is supported by the portrayal of headteacher views on boards offered by Fordyce:

I think all the Headteachers regard them as a rubber stamp.

Fordyce also offers an anecdote,

... where one parent wrote and demanded of the Headteacher, who was teaching in P4, P5, P6 and P7, that her son, who was in P7, stopped wasting his time on a Friday morning doing Scottish Country Dancing and to get more reading, writing and arithmetic because he was going on to the Secondary School and real education next year. The Headteacher was not very pleased but he was even more upset when it was discussed at the School Board.

This illustration seems to confirm the reluctance of headteachers to discuss issues such as the curriculum despite opportunities to provide justification for the existing curriculum and approach to board members. Fordyce, as Director of Education, was aware of his accountability to elected members and tried to impress on headteachers that they were similarly "publicly answerable" to board members and parents, but "Headteachers tried to say to parents, 'No, you can't come, it is a private meeting.' "

Fordyce treated the suggestion that headteachers have "learned how to manage their Boards" as not proven and asserted that "there are still far too

many Headteachers who do not perceive the School Board as important." Other evidence from the interviews would support this contention and also indicate that board members may have to be exposed to assertiveness training (which has never appeared on the school board training menu) and other skills, knowledge and information to allow a more proactive role with normal board business and to avoid the continuation of board activity described by Dignan's conclusion that "there is very little reaction unless... it affects them in some key way". She did hint however at a developing symbiotic relationship between heads and board members.

There is evidence of headteachers using their Boards to obviously effect something for the school in terms of improvement of some kind.

McIntyre on the other hand suggested there was evidence of heads also

...engaged in demystifying a lot of the educational issues for Boards. I noticed a number of them who were extra-professional as it were in terms of the relationships with School Boards. Although many headteachers have good relationships with individuals, they felt really Boards were their 'shop window' where almost they could engage implicitly the full parental body in what was best about their school and what was best about how they, as individuals, managed that school and delivered the curriculum and ensured a safe environment.

Dignan like other respondents proposed that heads may lead or work with boards in pursuit of additional resources or quicker responses from education authorities. This was not necessarily to focus board members on important themes and provide them with a rationale but to deter them from engaging in those areas considered to be the professional preserve; she was unsure if

the reason for this was to provide a purpose and role which did not intrude on what one might describe as the core educational issues or professional issues.

Beveridge assured us that a school board can offer a school a great deal, if the headteacher "can handle it well and even encourage it to go into areas where boards don't formally have responsibilities eg the curriculum."

- **Board members and the question of limited expertise**

The extent to which board members regarded their expertise as limited and the issues which they subsequently concentrated on, or in the light of the above discussion are 'steered' towards prompted general agreement that board members have been reluctant to take on new powers (Macbeth and Forrester). As noted they have had a limited interest in pursuing comment or action on issues such as the curriculum although issues such as bullying, homework and school uniform are raised. Of course as Gillespie and Munn pointed out there is little scope for in-school control or determination of the curriculum as so much is now 'prescribed' at national level through Guidelines and the Scottish Examination Board (now known as the Scottish Qualifications Authority). Several interviewees rejected the premise that areas such as building repairs were trivial issues or peripheral to education in schools. Parents recognise that

... crummy buildings and lousy school transport are actually considerably important to the kids. (Gillespie)

MacBeath while recognising a lack of expertise offered two other reasons for board behaviour; that they do not wish to be in conflict and they wish to have results and therefore focus on 'peripheral issues'. His research indicated that

For some people, there is a comfort zone about being able to deal with things which are straightforward and tangible and easy and you kind of know something about, so you get long discussions on School Boards about classic issues such as car safety, lollipop ladies, parking, zig-zag areas out on the streets and cars being parked near children's crossings. New paths across muddy bits of ground, new fences... would like to have a little more substantive role on a less marginalised, almost patronised role of being asked to deal with these things.

He suggested that there was a minority of parents who were

... prevented from getting into those issues... because of professional resistance to opening up these areas. (1) because of their own inhibitions or belief that that was why they met (2) by other people, explicit peer pressure, to deal with other things instead and (3) almost overt professional pressure not to get involved.

Fordyce was firm in his belief that in those areas that boards have tended to operate in, they have been successful "particularly on issues like buildings. As McIntyre noted "if the School Board wrote in, the Council tended to free up resources or in some cases to accelerate the programme that was planned" and agreed that this is consistent with them being content to allow the professionals to run the school. Involvement in such practical areas and specifically in the appointment of senior staff for many board members amounted to a major and successful contribution. He suggested that "they valued being part of that and they brought quite a richness to that whole procedure". McNeill from a similar perspective took the view that "These were safe areas where the professionalism of the headteacher was unchallenged." He provided anecdotes to suggest that it was not just a feeling of lack of expertise but also misinformation being advanced by

headteachers which encouraged members to engage as they did.

In one instance a School Board's Chair 'phoned me and asked, 'Can we talk about the curriculum?' I said, 'You can talk about anything'. And their answer was, 'The headteacher says I can't talk about it because it says in the Act that we can't talk about it.'" I said, 'No, what it says in the Act is that you cannot decide or determine the curriculum but it doesn't say that you cannot talk about it.'

While Steele believed "Board members need to be involved, or potentially involved in dialogue about their thoughts on the curriculum", Gillespie sounded a cautionary note about parents offering "ignorant criticism" which she insisted is encouraged by parents being involved on the assumption that simply because one is a parent, some form of expertise is brought to bear on educational matters. She suggested that the "Government has actually encouraged this kind of reaction."

9.10 A further development for boards?

The views of interviewees reflected many of the findings of the government sponsored research (MacBeath *et al*, 1992) summarised in 9.7. Having been involved in researching boards since the evaluation of the 'pilot boards', Munn (1993b) has continued with her studies of boards and governing bodies and offered a view on the development of boards by querying whether members were 'School managers and friends?' She argued that "boards have developed in ways unanticipated by government" (p.87). Munn suggests the monitoring and accountability function of boards acting as consumers to ensure "schools are kept up to the mark" (p.91) has rebounded and "instead of consumer voices challenging producers, they have sided with them to challenge government education policy" eg national testing. (p.92) In

terms of individual schools, members have taken the view that 'this school is a great wee school', have offered support to professionals, but have been harnessed "to put pressure on education authorities for more resources" in the light of their concerns about building fabric and lack of maintenance, and the little money available for books and equipment. It would appear therefore that so far board members appear to be more friends than managers and the evidence I have gathered would support this contention. Whether this has been an active choice or a reaction to the introduction of boards and the extent to which it may be sustained I shall return to in my final chapter.

Munn concedes that members are interested in *their* own school and by implication the welfare of pupils but argues if boards are to be instrumental in stimulating active citizenship and local democracy (Golby, 1993; Raab, 1993; Deem, 1994a; Deem *et al*, 1995) then "parental involvement has to extend beyond concern for a specific school" (p.95). Three reasons are proffered (pp.95-96):

- * understanding of specific circumstances requires broader appreciation of local and national contexts ie to change things at school level needs appreciation of who wields power;
- * failure to view "schooling as a common interest is likely to reduce ability to influence events" and if boards are in competition with each other this would allow education producers to play one board off against another;
- * "active citizenship and local democracy imply a concern with local society and communities which extends beyond a specific school".

Munn claims this will not detract from specific interest in their own school but should enhance understanding and experience. Forrester promoted such an argument in 1986 as noted in 8.2 when he "suggested that parents must

learn from teachers that effective power was best exercised at regional and national levels and I urged them to attend regional and national parents meetings." ("Paths to parent power": TSES, p.2, 16.5.86) National groupings of parents (SPTC) and board members (SSBA) exist and there is some evidence of lobbying government overtly and discreetly (interviews with Brodie, Smith, Gillespie, Fordyce and Hill). School boards, however, provide opportunity for participation by more people, particularly parents, than the comparative handful who may be involved at national level, especially if they may find it difficult to articulate the views of those they claim to represent eg not all boards are members of SSBA and therefore SSBA may only be partially representative of parent board member viewpoints, while teacher members are not included at all.

The possibilities of boards further developing federations and moving towards lobbying and influencing policy development at national level, especially with the prospect of a Scottish Parliament, cannot be disregarded. It is an important facet of potential board parent member activity, but the evidence I have gathered especially in the interviews suggests this may not be the primary concern or aim of many board members. The views garnered through interview on a range of other important areas for boards are discussed in the next chapter.

School boards interviewee perspectives

This chapter provides an analysis of the views on a range of related board issues provided by the interviewees.

School boards: perspectives from key participants and observers

10 Views from interviewees on concepts and other issues

10.1 Introduction

The general and specific approaches to the interviews conducted, including choice of questions, are outlined in the Methodology chapter. The analysis has been used in other chapters concerned principally with events. This chapter concentrates on the views expressed with respect to some of the concepts and issues associated with this study.

10.2 School boards: local democracy, participation or consumerism?

Several interviewees believed that the establishment of Boards reflected a number of purposes. These included:

- dealing with the weaknesses of school councils
- reducing local authority power and responsibility
- harnessing the parental dimension in education to support particular policy approaches
- decreasing professional power and influence in education
- extending community participation in and influence on schools
- recognising the co-educator role of parents
- providing an overt role for parents in policy making and school management
- building better relationships and partnerships between parents and teachers
- promoting political ideologies or policy eg. opting-out or establishing a management role for parents in schools
- seeking greater accountability, effectiveness and enhanced standards from education professionals

- extending local democracy via elected parent representatives
- listening more to parents and taken their views into consideration.

MacBeath, indicating that there was no strong well thought through rationale, suggested

... there was a feeling of confusion really about what School Board functions would be and what the underlying principles were... There is also a distrust of the professionals in the Thatcher-like legacy and there is a need to keep the professionals in power and make them accountable so you have got a kind of pot-pourri of bits of the Thatcherite/post-Thatcherite ideology all sitting around there which coalesce into this thing called School Boards...

Beveridge offered contextual clarification by suggesting that prior to boards there was a "very stormy context" in Scottish education presumably a reference to the industrial unrest of the mid-80s . He suggested that there were four strands to the educational developments in the period under discussion. These were greater accountability within and to the Scottish Office; devolved management and decision-taking at the most appropriate level; greater involvement and partnership by schools and professionals with parents; and more accountability to parents including the publication of a range of data of local and national significance.

Munn suggested that the principal reason for the introduction of boards was a continuation of the approach to "change the balance of power between producers and consumers". Brodie indicated a confusion in the Government's approach between 'consumerism' and greater parental involvement.

Macbeth's own concerns on this issue when interviewed were clearly set out

The question arises : who are the consumers ? Parents, as those legally responsible for their individual child's education ? Children, since they 'consume' what's on offer in schools ? Young people over the age of 16 since they are then legally responsible for their own education ? Employers who 'consume' pupils in the sense of employing them ? Society at large ? It seems clear that the government saw parents as consumers.

Others interviewed, with the exception of Munn and MacBeath, had a less theoretical overview but there are clear indicators that many were aware of concepts. That may be allied to the particular roles or posts which such respondents held. Fordyce, as a Director of Education, was aware of the "political push" for consumerist ideas being promulgated by the Conservative Party (cf Chapter 6) but he suggested that while parents were susceptible to developing ideas of this nature it was not necessarily something related to 'cause and effect'.

I think there was a build-up amongst parents, not meant by any political awareness by saying 'We want to know more... we want more justification on what is being done for and to our children'. Historically this coincided with a Government who said, 'We want consumer choice and we want consumer input'.

Forrester was adamant that the initiative did not reflect great concern to foster citizen participation and extend local democracy and suggested that since the onset of Conservative government in 1979, there had been little evidence of desire to extend such opportunity. He strongly supported the

view that consumerism underpinned the Government's approach including support of the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC) in addition to the two concerns for 'opting out' (the '*bete noire*' of the EIS) and devolved school management about which they also had several misgivings in terms of practice and the role of the local authority. Forrester also raised concerns about 'pushy parents' who may be resented by the preponderance of Scottish parents, the concept of representativeness and the lack of elections which would be an indicator of the health of boards as an expression of local democracy.

Forrester promotes the interests of the EIS membership and, as we have noted in Chapter 4, professional and parental interests are not necessarily the same. When they coincide or are 'engineered' to coincide eg over National Testing, then a formidable body of opinion and powerful influence emerges. On behalf of the professional association Forrester has consistently rejected the notion of boards as offering parents much; he has suggested (cf pp.205-207 for information on the exchange with Atherton of the SCC) that representation on national bodies such as SCCC offers them much more than local participation on boards. His 'angst' about the parental majority is still discernible,

Our view would be that the Board is very suspect as a vehicle for parent democracy. Many of them do not seem to represent parent views... If the idea of the Government was to have a School Board as a democratic sounding board for parents, this has not worked out. Maybe that is why Helen Liddell's document for the Labour Party states bluntly that they have been a failure... There is a question mark as to whether the formal structure of a Board does enhance democracy and provide a vehicle for parents.

Gillespie was adamant that boards were a political invention with little concern for citizen participation. She did not believe that "a management role for parents", which she perceives boards to offer in a limited way, increases the potential for citizen participation and democracy. She was critical of the capacity of the board to ignore the views of its parental constituency in particular, but acknowledges this reflects the Westminster model adopted throughout the country where elected 'representatives' can ignore views and wishes but are then at intervals subject to re-election when they may be rejected by the electorate. This 'trustee' form of democracy is discussed in Chapter 3. The size of the board, she suggested, is ideal for a small committee of management which might result in genuine participation but only for those directly involved. She opined that in some areas of the country parents, if not boards, have impacted on the executive management of schools in recent years.

... since parents have become the 'flavour of the month', and while headteachers still see the objectives of Boards as being highly political, it has made headteachers think, if you like, about that extra constituency which they are having to relate to. It is not that they didn't before when you think about it, it is just that now, in the framing of policy they probably think more about parental participation than they used to... that only applies to some schools and what we are talking about is best practice.

McIntyre suggested that there were attempts to make education more 'accountable and effective' in the late 1980s and that boards were a manifestation of this trend. He cited parents as the "obvious partners to involve", but he recognises the "tensions between notions of consumerism and the establishment of Boards in the sense that Boards do offer an extension of democracy".

McNeill, being a local authority official, emphasised the potential impact of boards and the under-pinning ideology on the role and function of local authorities.

Central government was anti-pathetic towards the power and influence of local authority... I would say at least 50% of any Government move in this area was influenced by its wish to reduce the powers of the elected local authority, rather than necessarily to increase the influence of parents. I accept there was at that time a general feeling that parents needed to become more directly or more obviously involved rather than on the sidelines.

Those who supported the notion of a consumer driven initiative included Smith who stated

... parents were wanting to have an influence on the education which their children were receiving. They felt they didn't have that, therefore there was a move towards seeking such influence and establishing parental rights.

Hill affirmed that "Board members see themselves very much as consumers 'We are parents and these are our children and we have expectations as taxpayers'." Munn was focused in her views of the introduction of boards,

The school board's initiative was part of a greater drive towards much more consumer orientated policy by government, but there were a lot of tensions then in government policy because consumer choice is focused very much on the individual parent acting alone and school boards are more about voice than choice, obviously.

This again suggests a tension between the two principles ie democracy and consumerism providing the basis for the initiative.

What may be deduced from the opinions and observations gleaned confirms Macbeth's (1990) analysis which suggested that there were few articulated central government purposes advanced and that this led to a potentially limitless series of possibilities for boards should they wish to know why they existed and for what purpose. (cf 9.9)

10.3 Boards and their representativeness

The question of the parental majority was touched upon in questions concerning how representative boards are, and what alternatives, if any, are supported and why. Macbeth concluded that a parental majority may not be necessary, but

... as time goes by I come more and more to think it's a good idea. At present only Scotland and Denmark have parent majorities, though I understand that Finland is about to introduce them. Denmark had them first and Mr. Forsyth visited Denmark and was impressed by their system, though you'd have to ask him if that inspired his decision.

MacBeath dismissed "the notion that partnership was somehow damaged by the fact that the parental majority was insisted upon." Fordyce was adamant that the "parental majority was necessary", and said "If you had a Referendum tomorrow, the majority of parents would say, 'Yes, we want to keep School Boards'".

Like Fordyce other local authority officials were clear in their support for the principle of parental majority. McIntyre was a proponent of the parental

majority because he considered parents to be prime stakeholders. McNeill observed that he was "not aware of very many votes" so that the parental majority is more symbolic. This concurred with Dignan's suggestion that many "Boards function without a parental majority" and rarely "get to the point of needing to vote on anything." She confirmed the symbolic importance of the parental majority but holds the view that "If there were no parental majority boards can only be 'a sounding board'." The parental majority offers an important dimension to boards and provides status and purpose to boards beyond that of merely being a forum for exchange. The degree to which the parental majority is used and with what effect will vary from board to board.

On the question of representation and representativeness there was a wide number of views offered. Macbeth emphasised the difference between typifying and representing a group, the latter involving "actively contacting and conveying the opinions of constituents." My own research into the government's provision for board training and information (*op cit.* , 1990) confirmed there was very little guidance about the nature of representation and on what being a representative is in the legislation, the School Board Manual, and in the subsequent training materials. Beveridge, at that time the HMCI with specific responsibility for the development of training materials, explained that this was

... because we were taking as light an approach as we possibly could... What was in the legislation, we could expand upon, we could support but even although we thought we saw ways of introducing things which would be helpful, we didn't want to put it forward as a direct recommendation...we did deliberately ask a year later in what ways the training had been less than

adequate...had representation come up at that point, we would have been very happy to produce some other work but it didn't. And yet, it is an important point when we look back and I wonder if everyone just missed it.

Research into training provision for boards (Arney *et al.* , 1990) underpinned Beveridge's remarks and the report failed to bring to prominence issues such as representativeness, perhaps because this was not emphasised by the case study boards. The GU Report on school councils (1980) had identified a number of areas for training and development and representativeness was one of several which unfortunately were missing in the school boards provision. Sometimes training providers can over-emphasise the notion of needs analysis with a specific group at an actual moment in time; this can effectively allow the bypassing of important previously considered concepts, obtained information and/or opinion which in the long term may have proved efficacious. The extent to which the GU Report, particularly its emphasis on certain key concepts such as representation, was or was not drawn upon at the time of the school board developments and subsequently is open to conjecture. Personal involvement (O'Brien, 1990) in the development of national provision allows me to confirm that the Report was never discussed at any meeting I attended, but that does not answer Macbeth's queries about Scottish Office provision:

What the reasons for certain biases were would be speculation on my part, though I have wondered whether what I saw as deficiencies were deliberate omissions or lack of acceptance or recognition of their importance by the Inspectorate controlling the training.

It is interesting to note that Hill and Fordyce, who both now represent the SSBA, conducted a training needs analysis for boards in 1996, the results of which makes no reference to training in representation being required; additionally the Scottish Office is providing support for the development and delivery of the new SSBA training materials.

Forrester opined that board members know little about the concept of representation:

In all too many cases, it doesn't mean anything. It just means, 'I am on the board. I was elected unopposed. I don't really know what the issues are. I am doing my civic duty by being on it'.

Smith, on the other hand, suggested that members "are there to represent their constituency, which, from a parent's point of view is the parental view". Smith was strong on how members find out what their constituents want:

... by getting around the school when events take place...in the locality and the town, people know you are on the Board and, if they have a grievance or they want information, they will come and tap you on the shoulder. The public, if you like, see you as someone they can turn to.

In relation to 'typicality' Munn observed that board members view themselves as unrepresentative because of the ascendancy of white middle-class males on boards while there remains a lack of volunteers in Secondary schools in "poorer catchment areas". Not all those interviewed associated themselves with those they might be expected to do so when they were on boards eg. although a co-opted member, MacBeath affiliated himself with the parent members because he regarded himself as a

counterweight and as

... somebody who could support them but also be in a position to have the kind of background knowledge which could ask the questions to challenge the professionals a little when they were maybe flannelling or 'glossing' things over.

Certainly the average board would not have such educational expertise to hand and Fordyce noted that "the notion of co-opted members being widely representative of the community varied tremendously...", while Dignan confirmed that it was "for those who are on the board to decide who co-optees are, apart from the denominational situation." This might lead to similar 'types' being co-opted and thus reducing the range of potential board member especially if boards request headteachers to help them choose co-optees (Fordyce); my own personal experience as a board member included a period of sustained professional pressure to have a former headteacher co-opted.

Dignan suggested that typicality was not possible when she indicated that it was "not uncommon for parents to be elected unopposed" and she concluded "I don't know how you can describe them as representative". McIntyre's opinion was "Rather than acting as individuals, parents tend to see themselves as representative of a wider body". This view was shared by others. Attempts to offer feedback to constituents via newsletters and events such as 'cheese and wine parties' were cited (Munn) as efforts by board members, albeit invariably unsuccessful, to interest those they were meant to represent. Munn noted that it usually took some issue such as school closure before interest was shown and that board members "become fairly disheartened by the lack of support". She also opined

...that just by creating opportunities for lay participation, you don't make people participate and people only become active when there is something they want to be active about.

Munn illuminated this view further in a British Education Research Association Conference paper in 1996 and confirmed dependency on the professional advice and interpretation of policy provided by headteachers.

Despite efforts to represent the interests of parents, interviewee perspectives would suggest that the majority of parents in Scotland to date are show few signs of seeking to exercise their representative or electoral rights. Board members have been disappointed by the apparent parental lack of interest in particular in their role and function; this must be dispiriting for some who would prefer active parental interest, while for others it will merely confirm the type of job they are attempting to do.

10.4 The structure of school boards

There were a number of suggestions concerning the appropriateness of and possible improvement of the current structure of boards. The issue of parental majority was cited on several occasions. Like MacBeath, who suggested while "there might be a notion of a parent majority seen as an explicit, political, snub to teachers...", Munn approved of "the idea of a parental majority" and sought an enhanced role for senior pupils in a more "open and consultative" approach to school management. This reflects notions of modeling democratic procedures within schools as democratic organisations. Brodie believed "The parent majority was good and was symbolic." Forrester was clear about board structures: "If you are going to have them, we would not want the parent majority, like the English governing body, we would want a parent minority." This has some support

from Gillespie who disapproved of

The paranoia that Michael Forsyth showed in restricting teachers to a minimum, in never allowing teachers to be Chairmen...

Gillespie also was concerned about elections having the effect of encouraging possible parent members not to stand. While once elected, Gillespie worried about the current accountability of boards to parents and much preferred the provision of a school council with linked PTAs:

What's different about PTAs from boards? Boards on the whole don't have constitutions because they simply operate under legislation. Most PTAs have constitutions and the thing about the constitution is that it actually builds in this area of accountability to the parent body at large. Now, the board doesn't have that accountability to the parent body at large in the same way e.g. the PTA has to have an annual meeting.

Gillespie concluded that people, their skills and abilities, are more important than structures of boards or indeed PTAs. Even with an improved structure, board members need to deal with professional domination;

... it is not the structure of the organisation which makes the difference. I suppose what we can say is that sometimes the kind of people who are attracted to a board, in those circumstances, might be more prepared to face up to the headteacher.

Munn had reservations about the co-option model because some boards "are better networked than others, and therefore can get important

business men as co-optees who can then be used as contacts to help the school in lots of ways."

There has been some research on initial board co-optees and who, if anyone, they represent. Soltyssek (1990) reported his research on the first year of boards and the experience of co-optees in an article entitled "Press-gang democracy" (TESS, 1.2.91, p.18). He noted that in the run up to boards "little attention appeared to be paid to the second most numerous group of board members, the co-optees." The Act allows boards a considerable measure of autonomy in co-option, but he suggests a "reconsideration of co-option might be worth while". He was clear that selection was problematic and that "most boards suffered from insufficient guidance about possibilities which might be appropriate for their circumstances". Boards he suggested

...would be well advised to consider co-option conceptually, deciding whether a representative (to reflect groups with an interest in the school or even to represent that somewhat nebulous entity, "the community") or a functionary (to carry out some task for the school or board) is appropriate.

Local commerce associated with his case-study boards reacted lukewarmly to co-option. Boards felt pressurised especially by headteachers to co-opt to the extent that early agendas were dominated by the topic; the fact that "the Act does not preclude boards delaying co-option until they find exactly what they require" did not allay the pressure. His findings indicated that while "co-option was a rather negative experience, this was not wholly the case." He found co-optees to be committed people with much to offer, but the rush to co-opt combined with

"the arrangements which oblige boards to appoint four-year, full-voting status co-optees could work against boards using co-option effectively and flexibly." He concluded that board purposes could be addressed "by timely temporary co-option" which would allow those with specialist knowledge to function only when such was needed. This would allow flexible and sensitive response to local needs. Soltyssek argued that boards

... should be given the freedom to define their own co-option requirements, deciding for themselves the numbers, terms of office and voting status which they feel appropriate...Judging by what I have seen, board members are well able to shoulder that responsibility.

It would appear that the experience of co-opted governors is problematic in England too. The first phase of an on-going national study of business community school governors (instituted by the 1986 Act) in England reported by Punter (1996) would suggest "a lack of clarity concerning the possible priorities and roles appropriate for business governors" but it remained "appropriate to co-opt governors to represent the views and interest of the wider business/industrial community".

McNeill, had serious reservations about the role:

I personally have still to be convinced about what particular contribution the co-opted member can make and I speak as a co-opted member of two boards.

Gillespie too had concerns about co-option and developing trends:

I think a lot of schools run without co-opted members or with badly attending co-opted members. What is beginning to

happen as a trend, and I think it is a very regrettable trend, is that parents who have been on school boards and whose children are involved, tend to go back to those boards as co-opted members.

She was worried about the emergence of the "professional board person". McIntyre expressed the opposite concern about the transient nature of board membership and the loss of key parents and he even suggested "there should be some kind of flexibility built in that you could co-opt people back onto the board. " If Gillespie is correct, this may already be happening in an informal way.

Macbeth cited Chapter 5 of his book where "the efficient use of sub-committees of the school board and parents' associations are the improvements" he would advocate. Using the facility enshrined in Section 6(3) of the School Boards Act "would enable school boards to concentrate on essentials by unloading side-issues on to committees." An additional bonus is the extension of 'membership' as outsiders can be coopted to such sub-committees.

MacBeath suggested the non-membership of the headteacher is something which might warrant review as he thought "it rather emasculates the headteacher in a way or puts the headteacher into a kind of ambivalent position being outside the board, wielding quite a lot of power, but still not being a member of the board."

Fordyce disapproved of the enlarged boards envisaged in 1996 by the Labour Party with extended representation for Social Work representatives etc. He saw this as practically unworkable, but Forrester

disagreed and suggested the EIS "would want to be beef up the non-parents like the councillors and the staff and other agencies."

Those interviewed reflected a range of concerns about the current structure of boards including membership, elections and the role of co-optees. There would appear to be minimum demand for radical structural change or development with the exception of the professional desire to see the parental majority removed.

10.5 Board members and promoting parent and community interest

Encouraging improved communication and greater participation at local level are regarded as very important. One of the clear responsibilities of boards is outlined in Section 12(1) of the School Boards Act viz the duty to "promote contact between school and parents of pupils in attendance at the school and the community...". This conveniently ignores the legal responsibilities of parents for the individual child's education and illustrates the dominant teacher-centred view which might place parents in the mass of 'external agents to the school' who make up the 'community' the school relates to. Those parent members interviewed saw the importance and results of greater communication but indicated some problematic areas:

Engaging parental interest

There are always activists and the other sort of people who are not interested. This is a complaint which professional teachers make about parents. It is a case of how much to tell a parent without frightening them off. (Hill)

... the people who have been involved in Boards might say that there is greater knowledge amongst the parent body or greater participation by parents in their children's education as a result

of School Boards being established; they perhaps may feel that very strongly. (Steele)

... one way of ensuring good attendance at School Board meetings was to put in something like, 'We are about to close the school' and then you would have more people there than you would know what to do with. (Smith)

Working with limited knowledge

... the capability of the school board to explain things when they have only heard half a story. (Hill)

Taking up excessive personal time of board members

... you have to be a single issue parent. My entertainment is being on the school board and not going to the pictures or restaurants. (Gillespie)

Demanding commitment and energy

... the board operating as a sort of clearing house between the school and the parents in any kind of meeting in an energetic way, then you are actually asking board members to provide an awful lot of extra time in terms of not just reading all the garbage they get but ...holding meetings with parents and perhaps attending parent-teacher meetings... That takes a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of time.. (Gillespie)

There were suggestions from non-parent members about how boards might encourage greater participation, Forrester for example stated that boards should:

... send out a Newsletter every month or something equivalent. They would invite the public for more consultations with them and not just to be a token presence at the Board meeting.

He recognised that it is "desirable that lay persons should know about schools", and he "would not defend a professional closed shop".

Reflecting teacher interests referred to above he failed to distinguish between parents and other interested lay persons. He acknowledged the rights of certain community representatives to attend meetings of the board eg local councillor, but he held the view that community involvement tends to be bureaucratic but he was "not bristling with ideas" as to how this could be improved.

Beveridge insisted that it is "important that the board doesn't become detached from its community." While recognising the importance of newsletters and meetings he was alert to the "real danger that there is another pool of parents who aren't touched either by the school or school board" and it is such parents who should be communicated with.

Beveridge too failed to distinguish the parent group from the mass of the community. He suggested an area messenger approach adopted by some churches (also cited by MacBeath) "where the members take particular areas and try to get around as many of the locals as they possibly can." It is not clear if this would involve parents with children at the school only or everyone in an area. General lack of definition of 'community' does not aid matters but the tendency of professionals engaged in education to 'lump together' parents and the rest into the 'community' does not help. The messenger proposal is intriguing offering a role for boards in trying "to get at the people they are not attracting into schools", but how realistic is it in terms of board member commitment to date? The possibility of board members seeking out parents and/or others in some school related initiative might not necessarily be welcomed by those who are sought out in such an activity.

Continuing the wider 'community' beyond parents aspect of this theme, McIntyre cited a number of very successful business-community developments with large companies based locally viewing involvement with the board as community participation. His description of some fairly powerful business representatives was qualified when he spoke of their input to the board. Advising that "People in education tend to try and justify that it is a very specialised field with a specialised core of knowledge" and this can be daunting even for most able people; he described how one co-optee (with echoes of the earlier discussion above),

... would say to you privately that she really doesn't feel confident enough to really get involved with some of the debates and issues involved in a School Board. She is happy just to represent the community and perhaps contribute to a wider non-generic type of discussion.

Munn agreed that boards depend on an issue to focus their communication efforts but suggested much depends on the nature of the school and its relationship with its community and she states "If a school is kind of closed off from its community, then it is unrealistic to expect a school board to change that just by its existence." Whereas if a school is more open and involving then communication is enhanced.

On the parental dimension, McNeill offered more practical proposals suggesting boards use existing means of school-home communication which boards might 'piggy-back' on eg. parents' evenings, using School Newsletters when there is business to report; he warned against the Annual Report and annual meeting as parent response and results can often disillusion. He promoted PTA meetings which allow the board to be

"seen as part of the general body of parents", and adjoined "make sure that you maintain good close relationships with your PTA". While he cited a number of boards linking well with their PTAs, and that at primary school level "common membership between the board and the PTA" is not unusual, he was mindful of potential tensions between PTAs and boards and insisted there is no point in boards "trying to take over duties which are being done well by PTA" eg. fund-raising. Fordyce and Dignan stated that great efforts have been made in this area within Dumfries and Galloway which have succeeded in encouraging the development of PTAs, but how success is measured was queried.

They engaged in a range of activities themselves or got the school to do it. More curriculum evenings for parents on particular topics. More liaison with different agencies within the community and more newsletters etc. but more doesn't necessarily mean better. (Dignan)

Dignan said that the quality level, content nature and frequency of production of some school newsletters for parents is "vastly better" than some years ago, but how attributable this is to school boards is difficult to judge in the context of school developments and "in an era of PR and marketing" it may be part of a broader thrust or the recognition of a need for enhanced communication and accountability. She concluded that "perhaps boards have forced a greater awareness" of such approaches. McIntyre also recognised the developing importance of 'marketing' one's school; he pointed out, however, that schools

... are not in competition - that's too strong, but they are very much in the public eye and they have got to produce a positive image of what the school is about so they are very adept at that now.

Macbeth was conscious of the differentiated constituencies which board members have eg teacher members can report quickly in the staffroom context, but for parents the situation is different. He said that Parent Associations (not PTAs) "should become a support service to the parent members, providing means to communicate," and that the PA "should, by its constitution, be forbidden to raise funds except for purposes of educational and management communication." This calls for a different role for PAs; for them to be focused on the board and educational matters rather than as is sometimes the case now on social and fund raising activities to generally support the work of the school. The purpose of a PA would be to engage in activities which would enhance communication channelled through the board?

Of the three researchers, MacBeath said most on this topic. From the perspective of board involvement in quality assurance and publicity, he claimed,

The School Board is a very important locus for quality assurance or school improvement; how do we let other people know how good our school is? I think that is really the kind of substantive issue a School Board can get into.

This might be a threatening or at least challenging role "to schools and for board members". He described some of the attributes and processes which might assist this approach.

The school board ideally:

- (i) will be supportive, collaborative and critical, as a sounding board;
- (ii) will have a confirming and challenging role for the school;

- (iii) requires to be familiar with "what makes a good school";
- (iv) needs to differentiate between good and poor evidence or indicators;
- (v) will be able to affirm, reinforce and legitimise the professional role;
- (vi) will develop the self-confidence to publish negative aspects because the climate created can accommodate negative aspects;

The school ideally:

- (i) will recognise the school and board needs to create a level of openness, collegiality, and lack of threat to allow this to succeed;
- (ii) needs a fairly exceptional headteacher and management team to create such a necessary climate;
- (iii) will recognise the assistance it is getting from its open non-censorial approach.

The constant in the above has been 'ideally' and MacBeath recognised the particular difficulties Scots might find with such an approach. Our inability to deal with conflict other than recognising it as aggression; the notion which other cultures accept that argument is good and that we can grow and develop because we can agree to disagree. MacBeath concluded by saying,

It is a lot to expect without a lot of support and a lot of sophisticated understanding for the School Board to engage in dialogue at that kind of level so we tend to argument, we tend to get compromise, but we don't often get that kind of real engagement with the issues.

10.6 Boards, training provision and information

I must declare my own involvement in the development of the nationally

provided training materials. I have defended the general approach in the national materials (O'Brien, 1990) but identified some areas where there were gaps and possibilities for further development and argued for "a widening of focus" (*op. cit.*, p.114). While appropriate training was regarded as valuable, the style and content of the training elicited comment by those interviewed. Gillespie suggested,

The early training stuff reflected the type of training done on School Teachers' staff development days. There was quite a selection of participative workshops. Now, that is fine when you are doing that on a paid salary. It is a whole different ball game when you are spending your time doing these exercises. I don't think they get you anywhere.

Macbeth took a similar view,

...that the materials were over-long and, in places, suited more to undergraduate or initial teacher training than to assisting busy citizens who were giving up their time and who needed pithy guidance on how to carry out their school board roles economically in terms of time and effectively in terms of representing their constituents and contributing to the school's main function: education.

Beveridge, as prime coordinator of the creators of the training materials answered the point about volume and scope of the materials:

You know, we did put in warnings like "Do not try to work your way through all these materials. This is not a novel. If you find that a question comes up at the Board and it is an area that you would like to think a little more about, there may well be training materials on it. Have a look and see and if you think they are suitable, and if you want to get into more depth, go on a module." I think the offer was there and the choice that we were

giving to people was far from demeaning; it was very responsible...

The materials were 'piloted' and circulated for comment and critique; both Macbeth and Gillespie were involved in this process. Gillespie describing a 'pilot' session said,

I went to one of these and the stuff was awful and I wrote a very critical response back... 'That's not what parents want, that's not what we use and it couldn't in any way be used by us.'

The revision of materials was the responsibility of the Scottish Office who took advice from a range of interested parties. Beveridge rebuts such criticisms,

'When the materials were used in roughly the way they were designed, did they work?' Again, the majority of them said the units and modules did work. Given the context, the scale of the operation, and the constraints, I think it was a very successful project.

There is little quantitative evidence to confirm Beveridge's view that the majority opinion was that units and modules worked. Negative responses seem common when members offer views on training but some interviewees disagreed. Smith when interviewed said " the training was quite good and quite a number of people made use of it... it was good in that it gave them a wider vision of what could be achieved." This was more positive than the original view attributed to him:

The extensive official Scottish training pack was criticised for being too bulky and too tied to the preconceptions of those who

created...because time available to parents was limited, the need is for short and simple training based on clarity about needs. (EPA-INFO, Bulletin of the European Parents' Association, No. 7, April 1990)

Brodie felt the providers "probably did not too bad a job in terms of investing some money and producing some booklets and videos...I would say that there was a realistic attempt to provide adequate training and probably it would have been difficult to do more."

Not surprisingly, MacBeath, while acknowledging the evidence of 'problems' with the training provision, indicated in Arney *et al.* (1990), defended the style and stated:

If you put down materials neutrally in front of people who aren't used to that style, of course they can look patronising or they can look quite facile or trivial on the face of it. Some of the materials actually do look like that. Worse, of course, you can have them put on the table with, 'Well, I don't think much of this stuff,' 'What do you think?' Of course you create a climate in which people are going to dismiss it.

Munn was concerned that board members were perceived as 'empty vessels' and that not enough recognition is given to the strengths and experiences or 'cultural capital' that they bring with them to the task. Reflecting on whether national training neutralised "some of the Board's democratic objectives, either by not mentioning them or by concentrating on other things" she indicated

... not a lot of people went on Board training, so whatever anyone says, you would have to bear that in mind. Not all people participated. I think another view is that the very concept of training could serve to disempower people.

Fordyce described the SSBA 'needs analysis' which resulted in three courses being run now with the support of the Scottish Office, "one of them on effective meetings, one on effective communication and one on powers and responsibilities of partnerships." Further developments are anticipated in training about appointments to Promoted Posts and Devolved School Management. With the exception of DSM, such themes were covered in the original material but possibly the courses now being run do not adopt a similar training style?

In retrospect MacBeath thought "the information content within the training materials was possibly lacking despite the the efforts of the training materials "to give information back up in the form of videos, in the form of further reading" but it may have been unrealistic "to expect people to go off and do a lot of reading and thinking, because they were volunteers and had a limited amount of time available to them." Gillespie and Dignan also recognised the range of people being provided for:

I think one of the problems about training is that you get people from a variety of backgrounds on boards and you cannot provide universal training for people who have come from such kinds of backgrounds. (Gillespie)

Gillespie also suggested omissions and

The training has had nothing at all to do with issues like what is representation, what does it mean to, you know, communicate back decisions or anything like that. Rather than encourage democracy and greater participation I think that the structure of Boards has actually led Board members to feel that they are the elite and above communication and representation. They feel that their role is not to be a parent amongst parents but rather to be somebody who calls the Headteacher by their first name.

My own previous conclusions (1990, pp.105-120) on the national training provision acknowledged that there were significant differences in emphasis between materials focusing on **educational and schooling processes** (47%), **board processes** (30%) and **management** (53%). I argued that members "require knowledge and insights into schooling processes" but that no "no training programme can hope to cover all potential aspects" of the member's role and that such limits may mean certain themes never appear and of those that do some will "wither on the vine". The uptake of training since then would appear to endorse that viewpoint. I noted that the materials provided a substantial 'window on the school' which I would continue to argue is necessary; operational insights will afford members opportunities to determine the areas they may wish to engage with.

...such insights will inform their decision-making at appropriate moments, possibly allow them to better understand technical reports from the professionals involved and allow them to make appropriate judgements. (p.107)

Becoming familiar with the workings of the school with training, a mix of actual direct experience and discussion of it might be more informing. The SED materials provided limited information about accountability and representation eg 1% of the materials related to training in representation. I suggested more emphasis on these themes would be logical but little has been done as part of my conclusion that while much of the provision was arguably relevant, it was too narrow and required a "widening of focus to provide for knowledge and skills on issues such as representation and accountability" (p.114).

I accepted that not everyone enjoys a participative style of training and Gillespie's reaction bears this out. The new materials produced by SSBA are more 'traditionally' delivered but I have no evaluative evidence to offer further comment. I proposed (p.119) adopting a process for training which not only provided information but included "consideration of ways of responding or engaging" with the issues they are attempting to address. I still believe in the light of this study that much work needs to be done to 'empower' board members, while recognising that perhaps for many members that such empowerment will remain something which they do not wish to have.

Several management developments have occurred since the inception of school boards, eg new unitary authorities and perhaps the most important of which is devolved school management; this forms the focus of the next chapter.

Devolved school management

This chapter reflects on the emergence of devolved school management in England and Wales and subsequently Scotland.

The possibilities offered to boards by this development are considered.

Management developments and school boards

11 School management developments and school boards

11.1 Devolved school management policies

School Management : The Way Ahead (SOED,1992a) and the government's response to this consultation process (SOED, 1992b,) indicated the determination to establish some form of local management in line with ideological approaches (cf Chapter 6) to markets (Hartley, 1994b). The Scottish approach was not modelled on the Local Management of Schools (LMS) systems established in England and Wales (Hill ,1989; Davies and Braund,1989; Gilbert,1990; Taylor,1990; Maclure, 1992). Prior to examining the Scottish proposals for Devolved School Management (DSM), a brief consideration of aspects of LMS south of the border may prove illuminating.

11.2 Local management of schools: the English Experience

An important difference between the Scottish and English experience must be noted, in England executive power (especially financial) has been delegated to the governing body whereas in Scotland it is delegated to the headteacher. Hill (1989, p.1) indicates that experimentation with financial delegation began in other countries in the 1970's. Pilot schemes involving delegation of 80% of total resources were initiated in a number of English LEAs and Local Financial Management (LFM) quickly developed in a number of LEAs in the 1980's. It should be noted that the management functions of governors go beyond financial control, central though that is. Hill's rationale of the benefits of LMS relies heavily on the work of Australian authors Caldwell and Spinks (1988).

Bash and Coulby (1989, p.35) record that LMS was viewed "as a way of improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. They refer to the DES (1987) *Consultation Paper on Financial Delegation* which claims that LMS will:

- (a) enable governing bodies and head teachers of schools to plan their use of resources to maximum effect in accordance with thier own needs and priorities; and
- (b) make schools more responsive to their clients - parents, pupils, the local community and employyers.

The Education Reform Act (Sections 33-51:1988) initiated a national development (Bash and Coulby, 1989; Maclure, 1992) bringing forward proposals in 1989. Initially targetting secondary schools, schemes have been extended to the primary sector. Maclure (1992, pp.33-60) provides great detail of the Finance and Staffing powers delegated to governors including information on budget formulae and resultant staffing difficulties caused by using average costs (an approach rejected in Scotland) and cite (p.55) the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1988) which advised of a "change in role for staff, headteachers and governors". This move "from administering programmes which have been centrally determined elsewhere, to managing a programme controlled by themselves" is the essence of devolved management.

Hill (1989, p.27) analyses the important role of the headteacher in any delegated management or financial system:

- * understand what is provided and how much is spent
- * initiate work to reconsider resource allocation
- * assess alternatives and their costs

- * consult with those affected
- * decide whether to change, and what, when and how
- * record the decisions taken
- * evaluate the effectiveness of the change.

There is an interesting comment that "this is the role of any senior manager in any organisation". Certainly it is also clearly an outline of the approach a 'chief executive' might adopt in relation to financial matters and yet still be accountable to a board? The role of the board of governors is not covered by Hill despite the fact that the 1988 Act [36(2)] provides for delegation to school governing bodies of the responsibility for major financial aspects (Fowler, 1989, p.91), but other authors offer comments on this aspect. James (1988, p. 49) writing on LFM from a base of involvement as council leader in the Cambridgeshire Pilot Scheme, offers a range of interesting comments. He abhors the view that

...you can only run an organisation satisfactorily if you are personally involved in the day-to-day minutiae of decision-making, rather than setting the policy direction for the officers to work through, and seeing to it that they work to the stated policies and achieve the expected results.

James describes the approach which his own board of governors had to adopt - the establishment of several sub-committees in a proper structure designed to devolve day-to-day executive functions, but there remained (p.54),

... the fundamental problem of governors and staff understanding that managers still have to manage, while they set the policies and direction.

He concludes (p.58) by suggesting that LFM would produce better

governors and better governor- staff relationships, more consultation, more local and hence more sensitive decisions.

Davies and Braund (1989, p.55) review some of the implications of LFM for governing bodies. They outline the expectations of the developing role of governing bodies viz "... to identify educational priorities and policies for the school to develop and implement." They discuss the critical relationship between governors and the headteacher; the head, while likely to be involved in creating a school management plan, has to recognise the dominant position of the governing body. Responsibility for the quality of schooling rests with governors because of their powers and functions eg. in relation to the hiring of staff. They recommend detailed management planning to establish priorities and goals. The emphasis like James' above is on providing a framework for management to manage.

Pugh (1990, p.81) alerts one to the possible dissension if headteachers fail to recognise the new governor role. He suggests that LMS has transformed governing bodies, making them more business like and infused with purpose and direction. Governors need to know their school, understand the money, be able to manage the budget and to monitor the spending. Knowing the school and the curriculum are necessary prerequisites of financial decision-making, but it does not imply turning people into quasi-professionals as Sallis (1988, p.168) insists when discussing governor training.

The object is not to produce shadow teachers, pretend inspectors, trainee managers, imitation accountants, but to give governors the information and confidence they need to be effective in their ordinariness.

Schools over the past few years have been subjected to substantial curricular change and governors must be familiar with this. LFM would appear to have provided a sharper focus for governing bodies in England and Wales. Certainly there have been difficulties, notably in staffing budgets because of the formula for funding and some governing bodies find themselves in deficit, but the overwhelming opinion would seem to favour this form of devolution despite a strengthening of the role of governors; that may be because professionals have found an accommodation with governors or headteachers may still be controlling matters as indicated by MacBeath (9.8).

Thody (1992, pp.159-160) concluding her discussion of the developing management role for governors, projects forward a century with a vision of a situation where "The learning experience establishment is being governed by citizens who are actively sharing management". This she forecasts is because "governors became part of the development of democracy" showing "how citizens could be actively involved in government" and "governors became part of the development of management theory" since they encouraged a sharing of management between staff and governors.

11.3 Devolved school management in Scotland

Some education authorities, principally Strathclyde and Dumfries and Galloway, experimented with local financial management; Strathclyde partly as a result of the commissioned INLOGOV report into its own Education Department's general approach to management which proved so instrumental in changing the Department's approach and objectives. Devolved Management of Resources (DMR) in Strathclyde claimed to have accessed the best of the English experiences, while discarding its

excesses. The government (SOED, 1992a) began a consultative exercise on DSM (McDowell, 1994, pp.71-76) which generated some 1200 responses from interested organisations and individuals; school boards were among those who responded to the proposals. *Devolved School Management : Guidelines for Progress* (SOED, 1992b) offered a response to this consultative process and called for EA schemes to be in place in a phased development by 1 April 1994. Such phasing recognises that there can be no overnight revolution in this field, but there was anxiety created by the almost concurrent abolition of the regions and introduction of unitary authorities.

The principles underpinning the SOED guidelines include appropriate approaches which take account of local areas and individual schools (*op cit.*, p.2). No particular model is presented, but as noted previously, a crucial difference between Scotland and England is that "...the responsibility for decision-making should be devolved to the headteacher, with a consultative role for the School Board." Paras 14 and 15 are concerned with the relationship of DSM to the school board, reference is made to Section 9 of the School Boards Act in this context, although in practice it does not involve boards having a right to refuse approval of spending decisions. Specific schemes have been introduced with little impact on the role of boards, perhaps because the situation in Scotland appears to be reversed to that in England. In Scotland, the headteacher remains the key person up to a point namely the point of the board seeking delegation for a range of other functions. Little evidence, apart from staffing in certain schools, is available about boards seeking additional delegated functions, but if Heads fail to consult properly there may yet be a rash of requests from boards seeking what they might regard

as something significant to do. Much of the discussion and concern about boards since their inception has been in relation to their having no focus or purpose, or no real power. I support the view that influence rather than power can provide boards with a significant platform to promote the welfare of the individual school. Annex A of the Guidelines for Progress offered the Government's vision of the future (Para 3). It was believed that this would improve the responsiveness, flexibility and accountability of school management and will ensure that the interests of those most directly affected - headteachers, school boards, staff, parents and pupils - can be best taken into account when decisions are made.

11.4 Some indications from interviewees on associated themes

Interviewees had viewpoints on a range of related issues.

- **School boards and devolved school management**

The seventh edition (January 1996) of Focus (the SOEID produced successor to School Board News) reminded boards of the development phases of DSM, and noted that EA schemes had finally been approved in February 1994. Boards have roles re. staff selection, approval of certain expenditure plans and these remain unaltered, but they were advised in relation to DSM (p.3) that they had "the option to choose for themselves how much they got involved". This is not exactly a rallying cry, but that may be the intention and government may be content with apparent participation by members allied to the developing managerialist competence and enhanced professionalism of headteachers. It must be said that all Heads may not be up to the task and this may underpin demands for competence and qualifications for headteachers which have recently emerged. The day may dawn when non-teacher professional managers may be involved in our schools, will boards be able to relate to

such personnel if their interest and or understanding and involvement in devolved decision-making has been minimalist? Macbeth in his interview spoke of "a condition of watchful acquiescence" for boards in the future being necessary; he cited Thody who applied to English governing bodies the terminology "covert democracy and the illusion of accountability" and suggested that these "could well apply to the school boards of the future". If the Conservatives had been returned to power we might have seen a renewed emphasis on opting out but perhaps led by headteachers disillusioned with the range and scope of services available from the unitary authorities. One of the first acts of the new Labour administration was to 'outlaw' opting out in Scotland. Tension still exists, however, within the devolved model now operating. In England, EAs have been virtually emasculated, whereas in Scotland certain authorities hang on to the vestiges of former provision while others cast about in their 'enabling' role to secure the best deals for their areas in terms of purchasing goods and services. It may not take long for more autonomous minded heads to seek further delegation from EAs and to persuade boards to agree to such action; such an approach may force heads to involve boards in a more participative way in order to achieve larger goals but one must query whether such participation would be genuine.

EA officers interviewed had views. Dignan believed there was scope for headteachers leading boards into demanding more power locally perhaps through boards. Fordyce posed the question for heads, "Why do I need a middle person?" and suggested that there "might emerge a partnership of board and headteacher, a professional and a community, if you like, which comes to a decision" of this nature. Dignan was not for being blackmailed; the authority was there "to ensure that there is a strategic and equity

approach" to service delivery. She believed equity was a key issue and asserted " Our wee school is not necessarily going to get everything our wee school wants as we would be doing a real disservice if we gave into that." McIntyre suggested a closer relationship between elected members of authorities and school boards might emerge referring to local elected members who "welcome the opportunity to get down to the more operational issues".

- **Are boards there to manage schools?**

The interviewees, despite differences of opinion about what is meant by management, clearly felt that boards are not there to manage schools. It was suggested *inter alia* that boards are there:

to be consulted

... to help headteachers and others to manage schools and, in particular, to be consulted over major decisions. (Macbeth)

to be involved as part of the school and its aims

Management in the sense of people having a shared vision, a shared goal, a shared direction and, in a sense, being a learning organisation, of which school board members were part.
(MacBeath)

to exercise appropriate authority and pursue their statutory obligations

... one of the reasons why the parents were put into the majority to let them see that, if they wanted, on the matters in which the board had rights, they could actually take decisions, rather than just being a 'rubber-stamping' body. (Beveridge)

to make a contribution from a position of interest and knowledge

School board members... are there to make a contribution of some kind. As parents... They know what is going on in the school. They have a feel for what is going on in the school...they can raise questions and they can have an influence... there is still a reluctance in many instances to exercise that influence. They are still inclined to always give the headteacher and the staff the benefit of the doubt (McNeill)

to offer advice

‘No, boards are simply there to advise’. (Forrester)

to have an overview

We always took the view that school boards were there to look at the strategy; how the school should be moving as a whole...While the professionals had the authority they were to be accountable to the board and to let it know what the policies were about and let it have the opportunity to reflect on policies, to offer opinions on them and to influence those policies. (Smith)

to be reactive

their contribution to the management of schools is this business of being a reactive body. Sometimes I think it is offering advice to the headteacher (Gillespie)

to be involved in a form of governance

... a form of governance. By that, I mean a board which receives information, has an account given to it by the

executive officer, i.e. the headteacher and expects the local authority to be accountable for what it does, and expects the profession to be accountable in the sense of 'Well, are they doing a good job? (Hill)

Macbeth argued that the "main skills required are committee and consultation skills" if they are to make a contribution to management. Despite the range of possibilities highlighted, it is evident that it has been difficult for boards to adopt an evaluative or questioning role. While Dignan asserted,

Boards have not asked some of the hard questions that they could legitimately have asked.

Munn saw no management role, preferring the board to be recognised as a 'pressure group'.

In the sense of being able to influence something. So while a range of functions such as deciding or ensuring or advising are there on paper, I think they go through the motions. They don't really carry them out. I mean, if you were going to advise someone about anything, you need to know a lot about it and offer alternative ways about looking at the thing and that doesn't happen. But they put pressure on Local Authorities and they put pressure on Central Government.

The government's initial intention was to involve parents in the management of schools (cf. discussion in 8.4). Lack of clarity of purpose, inadequate knowledge and skills, lack of time and inconsistent commitment by parents despite good intentions and expressions of support for schools mean that to date the intention remains unrealised.

- **Board members and professionals**

Devolved school management may influence the extent to which teachers and education authority officials have dominated the work of boards. Have board members sought to support and legitimise the efforts of the school professionals to date? The discussion in 9.8 on the suspected dominance of headteachers provides us with insights too. Macbeth confirmed that "Heads dominated school council meetings, but, more importantly, professionals both in the school and in the education authorities dealt with mainstream issues, leaving minor matters to school councils.", and suspected, without research evidence, that this has been the case with boards. Support for professionals appears to be endemic and Munn, from her research on parent pressure groups, added "Even the number of activists including the SSBA seem to be highly supportive of professionals too." MacBeath offers a more conspiratorial line suggesting that boards are 'guided' by agendas and the materials they receive and he says that boards

... do plough through an awful lot of stuff that has come from the Scottish Office circulars, local authority circular or school business... you could say that a lot of that is taken up as a deliberate attempt to engage people's time. You never really get down to what might be parent issues but professionals would say, 'Well, you know, parents never bring up these issues anyway'.

McIntyre clearly believed in the good intentions of local authorities and assured us that "they were genuinely out to involve boards" but he insisted that authorities can really only take school boards so far because of the specialised or technical fields of the curriculum in particular and the general changes in the system common in this period. He "never had the

impression... that school boards had a different agenda", but rather they sought " more general awareness, general information, general support". This is not to suppose that boards were never critical or declined to ask difficult questions as he made clear, but he did allude to a controlling influence by the authority:

... if you keep them on that kind of programme, then they won't ask so many questions, which they tended to do from time to time. Hard questions were asked about, 'Is this Headteacher competent?' That came up. 'We feel this Headteacher is not delivering the best education for our youngsters'.

This was difficult for authorities because "they found questions like that quite difficult to deal with because their professional managers were the headteachers." There appeared a need for EAs to be supportive of headteachers. McNeill diagnosed that both EAs and headteachers were "wary" of boards in the first instance, but that headteachers quickly saw the opportunities boards could offer because boards "would be happy to write the letter for the headteacher if he didn't write it himself." They might not challenge the headteacher but they felt able to challenge the Authority because it remained remote and boards could exist with this and be seen to be supporting local school issues and concerns. In the developing context of devolved school management, McNeill was conscious of the situation and the possibilities for boards:

I am also not sure that every headteacher comes and tells boards before decisions are taken, which is what they are supposed to do... If authorities were serious about Boards challenging headteachers, then they should be given training in the area of devolved school management, which doesn't simply

tell boards how it works but tells them how to challenge the headteacher. And you should be looking to challenge the headteacher.

The idea of preparing boards to be challenging of professionals and their leaders is an interesting idea for Authorities. Perhaps parents need such preparation in some instances. Only Smith, of those parents interviewed, had views on this particular area of questioning, he suggested there was nothing new in professional dominance;

If you get a poor Chairman, then you invariably end up with a board which is being run by the headteacher and there were one or two examples, even in the Pilot Scheme, where that occurred.

but that boards potentially have the cure if they have an assertive chairperson or had a clear plan for action as his own board appeared to have and which "came as a surprise to the Rector that we were quite clearly focused on what we felt the board wanted to do or should do, and perhaps other boards didn't." Smith also saw a clear role for boards in school development planning over a period of about five years.

The role of professionals on boards elicited comment from researchers and officials. Forrester was firm that "a hostile school board is counter-productive" but, like Macbeth and McNeill, he insisted that criticism or support if deserved should be offered. His observations about the board-related role of headteachers and teachers echoes Bacon's (1978, p.115) study of governing bodies and observations of teachers being professionally loyal within a well prescribed management structure and making little impression on decisions related to the management of the

school. Forrester offered some indications of why this might yet be the case in relation to boards where the major professional role is exercised by the headteacher and the lesser role is adopted by the staff member because she "does not like to go against the headteacher" despite, in theory, representing the staff point of view, disagreement with the headteacher in public tends not to occur. Staff are aware of the public arena they inhabit when they "notice at a board meeting that members of the public and maybe local press are present"; additionally promotion prospects may be affected by open confrontation or the very fact of being a board member! Dignan supported the professionals sorting their differences in private but if necessary preparing the ground in advance and showing a united front to the board.

... if teachers and headteachers were going to need to be at some odds in the open forum of a board meeting, that would have been something that they would have been able to have talked about and made clear to each other in advance in the professional more private context, rather than that coming out in an antagonistic way.

Dignan continued by suggesting that the range of people on a board may "lack confidence to express disagreement" and that there is "undoubtedly a cosiness about boards and it is about not wanting 'hassle'."

Macbeth believed that, despite the difficulties highlighted by Forrester, staff representatives "should both represent staff and they should have wider concern for the welfare of the pupils, parents and the institution." He argued, however, that headteachers are in a different position. Delegated financial authority for the vast majority of the school budget rests with the

Heads therefore they "should be accountable to - render account to, or explain to - school boards with regard to their responsibilities", while recognising their administrative responsibility to the education authority too.

Forrester had little doubt that parent board members in the majority of cases "support and legitimise, so a headteacher has more clout than he used to with the local authority." Macbeth, meanwhile, offered an opinion on how a board should relate to professionals:

I strongly believe that a school board should give praise to the professionals when they've earned it; a board should not always carp. Equally it should not hesitate to criticise adversely when appropriate; and blind, unthinking support and legitimation are, in my opinion, to be deplored.

Macbeth's opinions resonated with those of McNeill who stated that boards:

... have questions and hope to get the right answers. If they get the right answers, they should not be slow to praise the school and should not be slow to let the parent body know that the school has done well.

McNeill went on to say boards "should be able to expect accountability from the professionals and from the local authorities". They should ask questions and be prepared to challenge answers if they are dissatisfied. He believed that challenging "is the way that they will influence improvement." This again echoed Macbeth's views about reluctance to engage with conflict, which he suggests is a human tendency; his view "is that an attitude of watchful acquiescence could be appropriate." This

means that the board will make it clear that they regard the professionals as accountable but will support them "up to the point where they [the board] are disturbed by something"; support is therefore a norm, but "in a setting of accountability". That is why Macbeth was strong on the concept of purpose(s) for boards in his book (1990) and in his interview. He urged "once a board has decided what its purposes are it should determine priorities and allocate time accordingly, not being distracted by 'clutter' pushed at it by others."

Munn spoke of a lost opportunity because there "was scope for the profession itself to take on a new dimension in relation to parents, - to accept that beyond the principle of parental involvement being a good thing there was potential for an enhanced professionalism" but that this has failed to be realised.

11.5 DSM: a success story or too soon to tell?

DSM is a recent innovation and conclusions on its effect and or efficacy are difficult to determine. There have been some studies of DSM in action (Wilson, McFall, and Pirrie, 1995). SOEID commissioned a study (Adler, Arnott, Bailey, McAvoy, Munn and Raab, 1997) which sought to obtain teacher views on the effects of DSM on school decision-making, ethos and teaching and learning and to explore the consequences and impact of DSM on staff; included in the study was an examination of school board involvement with DSM. Reorganisation of local government was coincident with the study and the researchers found it difficult to untangle the range of innovations schools were experiencing. However, their findings conclude that while school boards had a consultative role in DSM, "their active participation in financial decision-making was very limited". Little

identifiable effect on school boards was evident, members were not opposed to the approach nor were they involved. The researchers found a changing role for many headteachers particularly in relation to fellow professionals but not necessarily in relation to boards. The research found that "headteachers were assiduous in presenting reports and budget statements to the Board.... The reports were usually accepted without challenge or debate." Trust in professional expertise in managing schools was evident, the members viewed their role as "being to support the school, and drew a distinction between this role and that of the professional in decision-making." The report concluded that headteachers role and status had dramatically changed through DSM, and the trust exhibited by the boards offered an indication that the "relative autonomy" of heads was being enhanced especially in financial and managerial areas perhaps to the detriment of curriculum leadership? The trust of boards in professionals exhibited above confirms the findings of this study.

11.6 Recovering the lost opportunity: the possibilities of DSM

The DSM approach provides an opportunity for interested parties to make progress towards a meaningful partnership and to recover the 'lost opportunity' advised by Munn, and to engage with the issues as indicated by MacBeath (pp.330-331) - it also offers an opportunity for continued suspicion and dissembling when accountability is called for. Boards who do not consider their position with respect to their role in DSM will be failing those who elected them and that includes the teacher members - their conditions, rights and responsibilities will be dependent on the approach adopted by headteachers and boards. The evidence above suggests that headteachers are providing boards with opportunities which are not being taken up by boards. The moves towards greater participation

may be fundamentally undermined or given a boost by the practical application of schemes of DSM and board acceptance of their role.

School boards have been provided with a potential new beginning with the introduction of DSM. There is a real opportunity for a revitalised management partnership which may have been a missed opportunity when they were initially established. The evidence to date suggests that the activities of boards till 1994 have failed to live up to the various theoretical reasons for their establishment but DSM combined with a change of government may provide the means of revitalising school boards. This is a theme taken up in my concluding chapter.

PART V

Conclusions and speculative comment

School Boards: conclusions

This chapter brings the strands of this thesis together. Reflecting the questions posed in Chapter 1 and offering conclusions in the light of the evidence of the study.

Disjunction is evident between theory and system, and between system and operation of boards. The evidence suggests that boards have not considered the full potential of the school board legislation and have adopted a legal minimum approach.

Suggestions for further research are made and speculative comment on the possible future for boards.

12 School boards: conclusions and assessment of the future

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12 School boards: conclusions and assessment of the future

12.1 Introduction

This study has drawn on three principal sources of evidence to develop an analysis of participatory democracy in modern Scottish school boards:

- a. conceptual literature about participative councils;
- b. documentary evidence from the period, including two consultative exercises;
- c. interviews with key persons associated with the introduction and development of school boards.

Reflecting the questions posed in 1.6 (pp.8-10) the main overarching theme emerging from this study is that **the practice of school boards has so far failed to reflect theory**. This analysis has involved:

- consideration of theories relating to participatory councils;
- analysis of events surrounding the school board legislation;
- review of the implementation of boards in schools.

New to Scotland in their present form, school boards are now part of a tradition of governing bodies common in western democracies, but the evidence of this study suggests that boards have generally not been functioning in accordance with theories of participatory and representative local democracy with regard to the management of schools. The structures of boards appear adequate, but the full potential of the legislation has been insufficiently considered or acted upon by boards. The evidence suggests that boards have adopted a legal minimum approach and that government has apparently done little to change or develop this.

Earlier chapters have analysed relevant theories eg participatory democracy, accountability and management (Part II) and events surrounding the establishment of school boards (Parts III and IV). Drawing from these, this final chapter will discuss the main findings of the study which suggest that government intentions with respect to school boards have lacked clarity, consistency, coherence and continuity, and that these have contributed to minimalist functioning of boards and little support for, or development of, a genuine participative role for parents and others in partnership with professionals; a situation which satisfies many of the apparent professional aims of the period under consideration. In summary, the evidence of this study suggests that there has been some **disjunction between theory and system** (which includes pre-legislation statements, the legislation itself, and related information and training) and **disjunction between the system and the practice of boards**.

12.2 To what extent have school boards functioned or not functioned in accordance with relevant theory and purposes?

Democracy: participation and representation

Participatory democracy (3.7) would seem to be the cardinal theory for which school boards may provide a mechanism. Participative theories suggest that citizens involve themselves in decision-making at local level as a counter-balance to the remoteness of national and local government; they enable stakeholders in an institution (Chapter 3; pp.130-131; p.114; pp.124-128; 5.3; p.75) to influence local decisions and make local services locally accountable, and provide opportunities for citizens to learn from participative processes (pp.69-70). The concept of partial participation (p.70) involving the influencing of management decisions would appear to be most applicable. Reasons for participation (p.71) are relevant to school boards and reflect notions of the importance of local influence over local

issues and stakeholder theory (pp.73-75) which suggest that while elected representatives may be removed, officials have to be monitored.

Monitoring by lay participants, representing those with a stake in the activity (p.87), would prevent abuse of power (p.84) or officials operating from self-interest (p.85).

Representation has become associated with democracy (p.53). While little theoretical agreement exists about what is meant by representation or its practical applications (p.54), the logistics of local involvement often results in representative structures and processes being adopted and school boards are no exception. Questions of representativeness distinguished from typicality are raised (p.55). Representing is about action on behalf of and being accountable to those who have elected the representative (p.55). Theories about modes of representation are important for school board members; representation as trusteeship and as responsiveness are two important concepts (p.57-61). In terms of 'stakeholder' theory, representation offers an opportunity to influence the decisions made by an organisation (p.359) but may co-exist with and remain subject to representative local government.

Bureaucracy, professionalism and accountability

Bureaucracies are associated with democracies (p.82). Schools have been identified as bureaucracies (pp.87-88) where officials/teachers claim professional status (pp.88-96) with some justification (p.90). Yet tensions exist between the concepts of an accountable bureaucracy and autonomous professionalism. Accountability (4.5) in the recipient sense of being monitored and the proactive sense of rendering an account may provide a bridge between bureaucracy and professionalism and may enhance relationships between professionals and stakeholders (p.105),

especially parents. A monitoring role for the school board offers opportunity for professionals to enhance their status and boards can offer legitimacy to school and professionals (p.61). School boards, with parents and other members of the community represented, can be a local democratic mechanism to check on bureaucratic power and similarly be a check on professional power by seeking an account from the school and its officials (p.96; pp.126-129;10.1).

Management

Following the convention for distinguishing management and administration (p.110), management is here taken to include developing policy, forward planning, priorities and evaluation while executing policy etc is administration. Should school boards therefore be involved in one or other or both? With regard to policy, boards involving parents or local interested people (p.130) could:

- make executive decisions
- approve executive decisions (the power of veto)
- be consulted on executive decisions
- volunteer advice.

School boards may relate to one or several management models (p.113) which differ in scope, aims and process. Much may depend on the ability of professionals/officials, especially the headteacher and lay participants, to come to terms with each other. The capacity of those in formal leadership (pp.118-123) positions to be prepared to share management/ power or to permit influence through consultation and thereafter allow the executive/officials to carry out decisions and agreed policy is given some emphasis in management literature. These may be a form of management partnership (5.5) which will encourage boards to be involved in advising,

ensuring and deciding should they choose to do so.

- **Did the debate leading to school boards reflect relevant theory and purposes?**

School councils, dominated by EAs and headteachers, had significant weaknesses (p.197; p.203; p. 208), few strengths (p.198) and had bred dissatisfaction (p.193). This survived the hiatus between the publication (p.171) of the GU Report (1980) and the abortive Scottish Office consultative exercise of 1984 (7.3). Responses to the 1984 questionnaire(s) were mixed (p.188) demonstrating no consensus on the way forward. Underlying concepts did not inform the questionnaire(s) and the returns provided limited evidence of awareness of notions of accountability (p.200), professionalism and partnership (pp.200-201); aspects of democratic theory including participation and representation were referred to occasionally and meagrely.

School council members generally remained perplexed about their role and function (pp.189-190). Professional bodies showed little interest in fundamental purposes for school councils (p.194). COSLA, local authorities (p.186-189) and the EIS (pp.205-207) largely ignored participatory management and accountability and the latter asserted that parents were apathetic (p.194).

The gap between 1984 and 1988 and the nature of the initial school board proposals suggests a lack of clear conceptual thinking within the Scottish Office perhaps because participative councils were not recognised as important in the educational firmament. For example, HMI management reports (p.133) do not view school councils or subsequently boards as central to school management. Even the Main Report which emphasised

the role of management in schools and called for the reform of school councils failed to make a substantive connection between the two (p.205).

Forsyth's school board proposals (p.212) did fare somewhat better.

Despite little general enthusiasm for reform (p.199), the Conservatives had signalled their disquiet (pp.208-209) in their 1987 election manifesto which emphasised an important role for parents and other local interests in the management of schools. Reform of school councils (p.210) would develop a partnership between parents and teachers. Massively outnumbered by Labour MPs in Scotland, proposals seemed unlikely to materialise until Forsyth, the new Education Minister (pp.218-219), announced his intention that parents, local people and professionals would play an increasing part in school management with the ultimate aim that from this be developed a thriving system of local management (pp.211-212).

These radical proposals engendered resistance and entrenched positions from which it has been difficult to recover. Comments in this consultative exercise (Chapter 8) show people felt they were having a consumerist and management role thrust upon them against their will. It appeared that the government sought revenge for the 1986 teacher industrial unrest. Forsyth (whose role and influence is discussed in pp.291-293), regarded as a 'Thatcherite' in a less than overtly 'Thatcherite' Scottish Office team, perhaps was not fully supported by senior Conservatives and certainly not by certain respected backbenchers (p.268). Professional association officials, especially Forrester (EIS), campaigned throughout the country against the proposals (pp.220-221) mainly about 'unrepresentative' parents (p.217) and interference in professional domains. They were careful to informally associate themselves with parents, especially the two groupings, Education Alert and the LPAG which apparently sprang from

and represented 'grassroots' opinion rather than the SPTC which may have been viewed as sympathetic to government proposals. Such an 'alliance' can be formidable (p.312), and campaigners (9.8), rather than focusing on theoretical insights, promoted concerns about the proposals. Forsyth was portrayed as a danger to the fabric of Scottish education and as someone who did not have the interests of schools at heart, while fuelling the deep suspicion about the 'opting-out' agenda (p.220) which government politicians failed to dispel (p.267).

Some viewed the proposals as a direct attack on EAs designed to diminish their authority over schools and enhance the government's (p.264).

However, some EA consultative responses eg Tayside, rather than merely deriding the proposals, provided analytical replies and suggested alternatives (p.225). The consultation period indicated support for:

- one board per school (p.257) suggesting recognition of the need for more local involvement.
- parental involvement (even by the EIS, p.237);
- consultation and greater participation (p. 224);

but no clear agreement of what these meant (p.236), and indicated concerns about:

- the parental majority (p.250) leading to idiosyncratic decisions and changes to school provision;
- a lack of parents equipped for the proposed role (p.247)
- a management role for parents (p.227; pp.234-38; p.253);

and advocated:

- parents remain consumers rather than managers (p.248).

The 'dangers' to professionals were emphasised:

- especially heads who would not be board members (p.252);
- the parental majority (p.255-256) and imbalance of representation;
- the transient nature of parents in relation to schools;
- and 'unrepresentative' groups of parents taking control.

Forsyth's robust defence particularly of the "ceiling powers" as a mechanism to force EAs into line (p.222) was rejected and the effect, in my view, was to deepen unthinking resistance to the proposals and lack of consideration of their potential. The government subsequently produced amended proposals (p.262), but the parliamentary debate on the resulting School Boards Bill was overshadowed by accusations about 'opting-out' underlying its intention (p.265). The Bill re-emphasised a more significant role for parents, with rights to information and to make representations (p.267). Some Conservatives had reservations about aspects of the proposed legislation (p.268). The Opposition had a difficult time contesting the Bill while supporting greater parental involvement in principle and admitted concerns about the power of the teaching professionals (p.269).

Little explicit and coherent discussion of purposes and theory emanated from the debate surrounding the school board proposals and the Bill, but purposes are detectable in the proposals (p.213) and public press discourse of the time. A clear intention was to promote the parental dimension and government statements (pp.123-128) indicated a limited awareness of possible purposes derived from selected elements of relevant theory (p.367). Such awareness demonstrates improvement on the 1984 school council consultative exercise with its inept questionnaire (7.3) which resulted in confusing messages and lack of consensus. However, the failure sufficiently to articulate explicit theory and purpose, combined with the continuing general apathy towards this type of parental

involvement in schools had implications for the future of boards and their operation. Confusion over purpose and role ambiguity remains even today (pp.309-310) compounded by the system established including the content and form of the government-led information and training for boards, which emphasised administration at the expense of purposes or advice on accountability or representation. The nature of British law, which tends to avoid statements of principle, reinforced the lack of mission which has characterised school boards.

- **Did the system established reflect relevant theory and purposes?**

Discontinuity between theory and system may also be detected by contrasting official statements of purposes for school boards with the system itself. Purposes from official statements have been identified and include *inter alia* : an emphasis on parents and their interests (p.124); parental rights to increased information from headteachers and EAs (p.124); influence by parents on school management (p.125); community involvement in school management (p.125); influence by parents on school education (p.126); partnership (p.124-125); local accountability (p.124-125); providing a mechanism for 'opting-out' or progressive delegation of functions from the local authority to a participative council (p.126).

No overt statements of theory, aims or purpose appear within the School Boards Act (p.130). Some intentions are detectable in the legislation eg the voting majority of parents [2.]¹ emphasising parents, or involvement in selection of senior staff [11.], implying partnership and management. Rights to more information from headteachers and EAs are also evident in the Act, but little advice is provided about seeking out particular information or what to do with it. The assumption underpinning legislation

¹ Numbers in square brackets [] relate to particular Sections of the School Boards Act.

in this country is that theory, purposes etc will emerge in the debate prior to legislation and will be remembered subsequent to the enacting of the law.

Partnership or sharing in decision-making or advice about policy development (possibly initially difficult for teachers particularly head-teachers accustomed to considerable autonomy) provide opportunities for board members to participate and thus contribute at a local level in a democratic structure. The parental majority enshrined in the legislation did not necessarily invalidate a partnership but it confirmed professional fears (p.255; p.274), and despite proving more symbolic than real (p.316), perturbed likely parent members; conversely while the evidence suggests in some elections that the notion of having some power may have influenced people to stand (Chap 10), the limited powers included in the Act did not attract certain candidates, indeed the lack of power may have deterred able candidates, while lack of knowledge of purpose may have frustrated some board members (p.296).

The extent to which framers of the School Boards Act were aware of theory and utilised it in framing the legislation is difficult to determine. The nature of British law provides particular problems when considering if aims, theory and purpose are contained in the law. British law states what people or organisations must (my underlining) do ie **duties**, and what they may do ie **powers and rights**, and what they must not do. As a statutory organisation, a school board can only do what the law states they must or may do. For example, school boards must “promote contact between the school, parents of pupils in attendance at the school and the community” (School Boards (Scotland) Act, 1988, [12.(1)]). There are discretionary powers eg [8.(1)] where a board “may do anything which is calculated to

facilitate the exercise of their functions”. The board may not have delegated to it certain executive powers such as employing or dismissing staff [15.(2)(a)].

The School Boards Act has, self-evidently been a *sine qua non* of any school board success, but an important attribute (p.130) of the school board legislation is that while it expressly forbids control in certain areas eg curriculum, it does not prevent boards from discussing the curriculum and therefore having influence; the potential for boards to select their areas of interest is unlimited and there were also built-in devices to allow boards to develop at their own pace and choice [15].

- **Has the operation of boards reflected both the legislation and relevant theory and purposes?**

The school board legislation encourages structures and actions (albeit limited) similar to the indicators of democracy listed (p.50). Boards look democratic (p.43) and offer opportunities for participation and representative democracy and local influence (pp.40-42; p.66; pp.73-75), but practice may not reflect the legislative intention as was evident even in the ‘pilot’ experiment (p.272). Schools provide a local, compact and generally recognisable constituency for participative councils, through which parents, teachers and other interests from the community can be involved directly as stakeholders (p.75). Such participation can assist local institutions and bring influence to bear on local issues. Despite this potential, schools remain provider/official/ profession dominated (pp.88-90), local involvement (p.66) has been very limited (p.281) while local influence (pp.73-75) through boards has been minimal (pp.299-302). Not all schools have boards (p.280) nor elections, suggesting apathy or contentment with the school as it is. Uncompetitive elections to boards are

common, indicating a general lack of interest in such participation and suggesting that the parental body is trusting of those elected to pursue the constituency interest rather than individual aspirations. The extent to which boards are offering a genuinely participative and democratic experience which is both educative and functional appears to be limited.

Elections and representation issues

Establishment of a board depends on sufficient parents standing for office [1; 2; 20]. Those seeking election, are exposed to democratic processes and such local examples are potentially of educative benefit to the wider community. Parent candidates have limited means to promote their views or share their values (p.282) , and difficulties in securing the interest and trust of their electorate. Board elections involve parent candidates preparing a statement (p.276) to provide limited information to the electors and potential embarrassment if they are not elected in a secret postal ballot; this is a difficult process and reluctance by parents to engage is understandable and does not detract from a parent's continuing interest in their own child and in school matters.

Despite the parental majority there are categories of membership which allow participation by other stakeholders eg teachers by election and co-optees. Apart from the RC denominational arrangement, initial government advice on co-option encouraged boards to consider members of the community and business interests (p.322). Such representatives have volunteered to serve as co-optees and schools now may be more 'in tune' with local interests but reservations have been expressed (p.322-324). I have found illustrations of eager and skilled individuals from such categories of membership willing to help but being disillusioned by actual

board processes and practices. Evidence of an elite cadre of bank managers, accountants, and other business interests taking over the management of Scottish schools is in short supply. To say that such co-optees contribute little to the board may be unfair (pp.321-322), but they, like parents, appear to have struggled to find purpose and meaning in board matters (p.323). The number of teachers from other schools who sit as parents in their children's school (p.285) may be unhealthy, but that is an outcome of electoral democracy.

A board for every school suggests that local representatives will be in close touch with other parents, but is this necessarily so? Once elected, parents or community representatives have rarely established effective mechanisms for interaction with their constituents, even though the process of representing ought to include reflecting the views of the electorate. Board members may have been socialised into accepting particular cosy relationships with professionals (p.335).

Accountability issues

As public servants, teachers and local authorities can be made more accountable (p.64; p.69) at a neighbourhood level through the mechanism of the school board. The evidence (Chapter 9) and confirmed in research associated with DSM (11.5), however, suggests that board members have generally tended to trust headteachers and have adopted a role which provides support for and to the school. There is little sense of boards having made schools more accountable despite government intentions that parents becoming consumer 'watchdogs'. Munn asserts that this has rebounded on the government (p.306) and far from seeking accountability from teachers, board members have allied themselves with the profession

in seeking additional resources for schools and resisting further government inspired innovations such as national testing. Board accountability to its constituency is provided by the legislation's provision for limited annual reporting. The legislation [12.1] makes it a duty of board members to improve communication, but while some members have tried hard to enlist the interest of their constituencies (p.281) through surveys, newsletters and meetings (p.328), it is difficult to achieve and those interviewed confirmed this (p.326). Parents appear not to value communication with the board or take little interest in their work (p.281) until there is a local issue such as school closure when the status and power of the board has been harnessed to pursue specific aims often in alliance with the professionals eg in Glasgow, where parents through boards have proven themselves adept at using or exploiting existing legislation to delay or reverse local authority decisions. Boards, it should be noted, have not delivered 'opting out'; the small number of votes have largely been anti-school closure ballots.

Relationship issues

Government intended to enhance the parental role, but education bureaucrats appear reluctant to power-share with parents (p.298). Heads, designated the board's professional adviser (p.273), and not board members, tend to dominate proceedings (p.284) much as before with school councils (p.349). Teacher support (Chapter 7) for the retention of school councils may have related to the dominance of headteachers and therefore professional interests on those bodies. Professionals have fears about the capacity of parents to involve themselves in management (pp.247-248) and approval of '*per capita*' by the board was viewed as giving boards indirect control of the curriculum (p.263). Fears on this have not been fulfilled (p.300). Analysis of both the 1984 (7.3) and 1988 (8.8)

consultative exercises demonstrates the resistance of education professionals, who were at best suspicious of the proposals to involve parents more at local level; equally, parents, prior to boards being established, rejected a management role (pp.242-244). Headteachers, despite trends in school management towards greater participation, may have been initially wary of boards (p.350).

Most headteachers appear to have complied with the legislation but are not necessarily doing much more (p.302) perhaps because they fail to perceive boards as important (p.303), despite claiming to involve members in planning and development (p.284). Wise headteachers use the board as a 'sounding board' for policy development and there are signs that heads are attempting to involve boards (p.282-285) by demystifying schooling for example (p.303). Boards appeared less threatening to PTAs as the creation of more PTAs has been encouraged (p.329); and examples of good relationships, joint working with boards and influence of PTAs on boards is evidenced (p.284).

The activities of boards

It seems that boards are rarely pursuing a management or accountability function and there has been little involvement of boards in school policy formulation or evaluation of proposals presented (pp.282-285)

Headteachers are required to provide reports on educational developments and certain topics [10.3], especially important since devolved school management and increased financial control by heads (Chapter 11). These are often received with little comment (pp.301-302) with a passive, receptive mode of operation (p.298) generally adopted. Such a low key approach, markedly avoids curricular matters which one might claim are central to schooling. Theoretically, members should at least be consulted over important decision-making at an early stage to

counteract the dominance of officials (p.84). The interview evidence does not suggest this is happening (pp.293-294). Timing of consultation is important especially if the board has to have influence and not to be involved only in rubber-stamping decisions (p.283; p.302). Some signs exist that notwithstanding a predisposition to trust headteachers (p.300-301) and to avoid conflict (p.305), board members were becoming empowered to a limited extent (p.298) but little use was being made of this.

Peripheral issues (in the sense of not being centrally important to the functioning of the school) have dominated board discussions eg school transport. Boards have exercised some external influence through insistent representations to education authorities on matters important to them, often at the instigation of headteachers eg repairs to school buildings and additional resources. Many achieved successful outcomes (pp.303-307), but the issues have invariably been marginal (except when contesting school closures) to the core activities of schools.

Contrasting views exist about the nature of board involvement in management (pp.346-348) including suggestions that boards should be a pressure group rather than having a management role. Perhaps government's initial expectations of parents and management were unrealistic, as were notions of consumerism (10.2). For some members a local board forms a limited platform and there is drift towards a more regional or national role perhaps to the possible detriment of the individual school board. In theory this is an expected tendency and demonstrates an alertness to where real power lies (pp.307 -308). There have been no applications for increased powers and the potential of the legislation remains untapped.

Information issues

The conscientiousness with which education authorities have implemented the letter of the law (despite the reservations some expressed about the introduction of boards) has enabled basic effectiveness and deserves credit. EAs who must provide certain information for boards within the authority appear to have taken this seriously by affording, at least in the initial years (unitary authorities having greatly reduced such posts), support officers for boards such as McIntyre and McNeill. This provision, it was claimed, was designed to empower members, but perhaps there has been a concentration on structural issues at the expense of consideration of alternate ways of operating reflecting different purposes (p.293-295). There was a suggestion that EAs had not offered sufficient support (p.301). At national level there has been no clear guidance (eg in the training materials) on how individuals should act (p. 296; pp.335 -336) and this is discussed further in 12.3.

Partnership issues

A school board is intended to involve parents and community representatives with professionals in a management partnership (pp.123-127) which will encourage educational partnership, but this has not materialised with regard to central school policies. Perhaps the theoretical expectations are unrealistic in practice (7.1). The EIS, now satisfied that school boards as constituted operationally pose little threat to professionals (p.300), view the school board legislation as flawed (Forrester's interview) and a hindrance to its definition of partnership which relates more to the individual child than management of the school. Consequently the union does not view boards as the optimum way of enhancing links between teachers and parents; they acknowledge the support offered by boards to teachers but have consistently resisted

participation in management by boards. Scots traditionally have placed great trust in the school system and this has been transferred to professional teachers even by activist board members (p.349).

Boards may have contributed to professionals being more aware of marketing, providing information and justifying what they do in a coherent and friendlier way. It is difficult to assess if boards are solely responsible for this as other initiatives, such as DSM or recognition of 'quasi'-market forces or enhanced management training for headteachers or requirements for information following the Education (Scotland) Act of 1981 which introduced parental choice of school, may claim more responsibility for the change. Boards may be viewed as part of a wider social and educational context (p.310) which accepts the need to provide parents with information and choice. Increased recognition of the educational role of parents (heightened by the 1991 and 1995 Parents' Charters) have given impetus to the parental dimension. There is mounting interest in school standards and skills development driven by political and economic imperatives. In a sense market values have become embedded in the national psyche to the extent that aspects of 'Thatcherism' may now be acceptable in Scotland but not in name. Boards are now a normal part of the landscape and their removal would be resisted (p.315) and the Scottish Office consultative document issued in January 1998 suggests the Labour government will retain them.

12.3 Has process rather than structure encouraged a 'legal minimum' approach by boards?

By structure I mean whatever is prescribed by law eg membership, procedures and duties. By process I mean the behaviours and actions of boards. Functions within the structure may be considered in two

categories; what **must** be done and what **may** be done. By neglecting the second - especially the right to make schools educationally accountable and to seek additional powers (pp.266-267) - boards themselves have failed to live up to their potential. The board is advised of its formal duties, powers and rights in the School Board Manual and the Guide to the Legislation but these largely concentrate on what **must** be done. The legislation permits an 'organic' (p.88), flexible approach by allowing boards to seek more delegation powers (p.263; p.267) and the waiving of the proposed right (p.262) to promote board development by regulation. For many school boards, the reality has been a 'mechanistic' approach limited to the maintenance of the *status quo ante*. Historically, the most important moment with regard to functions came with Forsyth's retreat from "ceiling" powers which were replaced by optional rights for boards to extend their functions [15; Schedule 3], which most boards have not taken up.

Official guidance to board members encouraged a 'legal minimum' approach. Despite several purposes being officially identified (5.4; 9.8), there has been no clear direction or purpose(s) provided for boards. Boards can determine their own purposes in a democratic fashion but only if made aware of the possibilities to develop (which the legislation permits) does this become a meaningful opportunity to determine their own growth and realise or limit their potential. The approach and process of information and training has proved problematic (10.6). Bulky, time-consuming and only partially reflecting members' needs, the nationally provided training materials failed to focus on purposes for school boards and how members could represent their constituents which subsequently the HMCI in charge of training development admitted was something everyone missed (pp.316-317). Materials tended to concentrate on administrative detail rather than potential for dealing with central

educational issues and means to reject or delegate unwanted administrative issues (O'Brien, 1990). Resistance to training provision has been high and the time and energy required has not been forthcoming as forecast (p.253). Board members have failed to define their purposes and to settle on a role. This has influenced relationships (p.373) particularly acceptance of professional advice which also may be indicative of ingrained Scottish respect for authority eg Gillespie suggested board members had been seduced by their experience and closeness to respected figures ie headteachers, with possible detriment to relations with board constituents.

Marginalising or excluding boards from decision-making about central educational issues seems to have contributed to the 'legal minimum' approach. For me, meaningful participation should include involvement in decision-making not just passive receipt of information. Parental compliance appears common. The legislation promotes discussion of school policies in a range of areas, and there is a case for boards extending such areas of discussion (confirmed in the 1998 consultation document), which in a sense are unlimited because the law does not prohibit discussions, or making representations on a range of matters. The functions and powers of boards are perceived as tokenistic by those parents who regard boards as powerless, or as too onerous by those reluctant to shoulder responsibility even in a partnership with support and professional expertise available.

Pressures on board members' time has been more compatible with a 'legal minimum' approach than a governing approach. Policy making or influencing demands more time and skills (p.53), not always available to board members (pp.298-300; p.326). Training has not focused on

reducing time spent on marginal matters by rejecting tasks or by delegating them eg trivial functions such as dealing with all the correspondence at board meetings.

Headteachers have often seemed content to allow boards to limit themselves to a 'legal minimum' approach (p.374). Examples of decision-sharing or policy-setting by boards are rare and desire and expertise to confront the professionals limited (p.299). Anecdotal evidence exists of heads 'steering' their boards (p.298), some even appearing dismissive of them (p.302-3). Although parental involvement is accepted, even by teachers (p.236) and EIS (pp.237-8), lack of clarity about the board's role in management prevails and inaction follows.

The perception that bland co-operation is preferable to contentious debate may have fostered the 'legal minimum' approach. The frustrating experience of school councils (pp.196-197) resulted in calls for meaningful partnership (p.179) echoing aspects of the English experience (Chapter 6) especially the Taylor Report. The 'pilot' board experience (9.4) heralded developments viz an increased number of participative councils but no greater involvement in the business of such boards and little influence on schools. Teamwork and consensus (p.377) have been emphasised as suggested in theoretical democratic models of management (pp.117-118), but boards have not become focal points for constructive disagreement despite having the structure which would permit this (pp.350-351).

Apparently board members have been content to operate at a 'legal minimum' level. There is virtually no evidence of boards seeking enhanced responsibilities, maintaining the initial rejection of 'ceiling powers' (Chapter 8). No obvious agreement exists on what boards should do except with

regard to the quite low-level functions specified in the Act. Little official advice was provided on how to use the Act's more open-ended means to extend influence or take on new powers. This mirrored the lack of agreement on school council functions which created such uncertainty and confusion (pp.189-191). It may be too much to claim that a symbiotic relationship (p.303) between headteachers and board is possible given some of the other evidence of board-headteacher relations, but there is scope for both to work in tandem utilising professional and lay expertise for the benefit of the school, but with a much extended role for the board, as allowed by the Act.

Initial fears that teachers' autonomy might be jeopardised by school boards may have contributed to the a 'legal minimum' approach. Threats to professional autonomy (pp.219-220) were featured in the public perception but have receded. The 'legal minimum' approach by boards now appears acceptable to teachers and while boards continue to function in this way constructive conflict is unlikely to result (Chapter 9). Experience and the evidence of this study suggests the majority of parents appear to be comfortable with the legal minimum or are indifferent about the board. The symbolism of the parental majority seems to have left parents generally content but it is rarely exercised in a vote (thus vindicating Forsyth (p.222)). There is little evidence that the potential for influence (as distinct from specific executive power and responsibilities), embedded in the School Boards Act, has been taken up by boards; despite manuals and advice members have been tentative and unsure of their rights, for example to discuss any issue they choose (including staffing and curriculum), and headteachers have on occasion insisted, in error, that boards had no place discussing certain matters and this has been compounded by official advice (p.297-298). EA concerns about loss of

control over schools (p.225) have lessened as 'opting-out' failed to capture the imagination. Board members' general reluctance to become involved in a management role is evident, but from a theoretical perspective that is no reason to be content with the situation and a review might identify more improved ways of relating theory to practice, but the 1998 consultative document does not give a lead in this respect so previous lack of understanding may be compounded. In brief, the 'legal minimum' approach seems to have predominated.

12.4 Has central government been content with the appearance of democracy?

As this thesis was about to be submitted in January 1998, the Labour government announced a third consultative exercise on participative councils - *Parents as partners: enhancing the role of parents in school education*. In the light of the quite detailed questions included in the 1998 document, I felt some brief consideration should be given to it in this concluding chapter. There was a step back from "commissions" which the Labour Party had indicated prior to election in 1997 in *A Compact for Scotland's Future: Labour's Policy for Scottish Education* would replace the "top down failure" of school boards. The 1998 consultative paper asserted that "every parent must be a partner in the education process". It recognised that boards have not chosen to develop to their potential (1998, p.10) although this was put in the context of boards being encouraged to look "more widely at matters of interest to the school". Theory and purposes were again not explicitly dealt with and disjunction may be compounded by this consultative exercise. Questions were asked about extending board's responsibility for:

- the development and monitoring and even "approval" (ie veto) of policy, but limited to areas such as discipline were cited;
- approving and monitoring the school development plan;

- "responsibility" (nature not specified) for the overall school budget;
- functions, not presently allowed to be delegated.

Strengthening the board's formal role or providing limited but extended executive involvement was emphasised in the paper, and wider representation which would further recognise boards as formal bodies with a genuine role in the management and overview of schooling was mooted eg board interaction with PTAs and the EA and representation of boards and parents generally in relation to EAs and the Scottish Office. Effective representation was a concern, reflecting difficulties in attracting parents to be candidates for election and how board members represent their constituency thereafter. The appropriateness of current training and board funding arrangements was queried while an extension of boards to nursery schools was suggested. The general format of the 1998 consultation paper is helpful and reader friendly; while the structure of the paper and the questions may limit some responses, clearly lessons about carrying out consultations have been learned.

In contrast the 1984 school council exercise evinced the ineptness or disinterest of central government and its public servants/civil service. Scottish Office bureaucrats failed to develop an effective questionnaire (p.182) and apparently abandoned attempts to reform school councils. Forsyth's arrival overwhelmed the bureaucrats who were unable to counter his radical proposals. If a prepared and argued government blueprint for school council reform had been readily available, perhaps boards might never have emerged; that is not to say that reformed school councils would have been more or less democratic or involved than boards. The consultative process on Forsyth's proposals was insufficiently sensitive about timescale and there was a perception of little heed being taken of

the public reaction to them (p.224). My scrutiny revealed that while the consultative responses were filed in order of receipt, indexing was quickly abandoned and there is no evidence within the files released to me of how the replies were analysed by the Scottish Office. Were the originals analysed in a systematic way? The records available publicly are A4 photocopies. Or were officials taken by surprise by the extent of the response? Was there an expectation among officials that school boards would be non-controversial and that people would not get excited by the proposals? Or does it indicate that, whatever the zeal of the Minister, officials at a lower level were not pressing to analyse the data thoroughly and systematically? These are questions to which the present study has no answers.

Considerable funding has been devoted both to boards and to support facilities at national and local levels (including funding of the SSBA for additional training). This demonstrates the seriousness with which government politicians have regarded boards and has contributed to such successes as may be identified eg the EA contribution. Can the same be said of the Scottish Office? Those who framed the Act produced in principle a flexible piece of legislation with in-built potential for further steps to be determined by boards themselves with associated checks and balances. Overt powers in the Act for boards were limited, making suspect intentions with respect to participation in meaningful decision-making, but it may be asserted that this was a direct response to popular opinion voiced about the initial 'ceiling powers'. The legislation therefore may be regarded as a clever anticipatory framework designed to allow further development without immediately encouraging boards to take initiatives. Once boards were made familiar with their role, functions and the potential of the legislation, development was logical; much therefore may have

depended on the provision of information and training. As noted above, the general focus at the time and subsequently has been on basic, rather than extended, functions and responsibilities. Potential has rarely been stressed in official publications eg

The power to invite advice and representation from outside the school and the education authority gives Boards much scope to decide for themselves the direction they take. This may be especially useful to Boards whose schools have wide community links or which provide specialised services, for example, to children with special needs.

(SOED, no date)

Was this by default or a deliberate strategy to limit boards from the outset?

Substantial government funding for information and training (p.275)

supported an expensive national training package comprising in-house training materials for boards and other modules to encourage board members from different boards to meet and reduce isolation. A School

Boards Unit including a telephone hot-line was established within the Scottish Office but serious question marks about the form and content of the training in particular have been raised (p.378) and omissions which do

not bode well for active democratic participation noted. Boards perceived *School Board News* to be too sympathetic to and in tune with the government's policies because, while providing factual information, it offered advice on themes such as eg national testing and 'opting out'.

SOEID did attempt to address training and information issues eg producing new information leaflets (the *Focus* series) for boards and funding alternative training provision (p.382).(1998?)

Official expressions of contentment with election results (p.280), despite the number of uncontested elections, and of the work boards have been

doing, signal that the Conservative government was satisfied with achievements to date. Forsyth left the Scottish Office in 1992 and this may have had a bearing on such a muted response. Perhaps there would have been a stronger role for boards in relation to DSM (Chapter 11) had he remained.

The ability of boards and members to operate in practice on the basis of theoretical principles has been problematic and few calls to extend the rights, powers and duties of boards despite some indications of disquiet with role (p.283) have emerged. Boards may be contrasted with successful local initiatives such as the establishment of local housing associations and ordinary citizens becoming empowered. Why not in schooling? Perhaps the reason lies in the lack of a modern successful Scottish tradition of such forms of participative council in the field of education.

Local participation had increasingly been diluted since the dissolution of the 19th century boards. One board per school was therefore a major element in the re-emergence of involvement by those directly affected as stakeholders. The government had allowed the genie out of the bottle but it remains to be determined how powerful the spirit for more meaningful and involved local democracy will be and whether future administrations will do more to foster a sense of purpose. The results of the 1998 consultative exercise may provide the Labour government with the opportunity to do so.

12. 5 Did events and thinking from England influence the Scottish approach?

English experience has influenced Scottish development and *vice versa* eg the Scottish 1981 legislation on open enrolment was subsequently largely enshrined in the English 1988 Act. The UK's Conservative government (with a singularly New Right approach to policy-making

especially in education (6.4)) ensured policies in one form or another became part of the Scottish landscape despite Labour dominance in Scotland.

The parental dimension in English education re-emerged in the 1970s (p.141), especially their role on governing bodies which in name if not in recommended role were long established. Around the same period, England (Taylor), Northern Ireland (Astin) and Scotland (GU Report) all had reports on aspects of governing bodies or participative councils (p.144). Models of governing and purposes for governing bodies were identified in other research (p.146-148).

The 1986 English legislation standardised a national system and redefined the role of governing bodies. Despite not embracing a parental majority it emphasised the parental and business roles and dealt a blow to professional dominance (p.158) which was further reduced by the 1988 Education Reform Act (p.159-161). New 'quasi'-market forces were introduced driven by consumerism, and devolved power became possible for the 'price' of the National Curriculum which enhanced central government control necessary as a safeguard against idiosyncratic local decisions. Other theoretical reasons for governing bodies such as active citizenship have become overshadowed by such developments.

Governing bodies have greater management responsibilities than boards and have been finding these problematic with confusion of role common (p.165-167). There is scope for greater partnership which Scottish boards may yet learn from. Alternatively, England may learn from Scotland and review the management powers of governing bodies. Drawing from the English experience, a well defined and delineated partnership between professionals and lay board members to share policy development and

definition might realise my preferred management partnership responsibility for boards.

12.6 What changes or alternatives to boards could be possible?

The existence now of unitary authorities and DSM means that boards operate in relation to local government in a very different and more immediate environment than in 1988. Increasing financial stringency combined with 'value for money' concerns provides potential for an alliance between headteacher and board against the local authority. EAs may no longer afford certain services and reduced access to those which remain may lead schools to question their relationship with the EA. Secondary headteachers, especially in association with boards, might have become interested in pursuing 'opting out' and dispensing with the services of the EA, but Labour's 1997 election victory makes this no longer possible.

Board members lack benchmarks to assess the professionalism of headteachers and staff. Perhaps the current lack of agreed standards of professionalism expected or a code of professional conduct contributes to a board's inability to make its school accountable. At a time when standards are being emphasised this is peculiar. The Scottish Qualification for Headship could provide a stimulus for developing expectation guidelines for boards, but the history and content of training for heads and board members to date does not augur well for such an emphasis since professionals will design and develop training materials for the qualification, and since it is likely to be accredited by the GTC, school board and parental matters may be marginalised.

Schools, particularly in Scotland, are now projecting images of self-help eg

the self-evaluating school, self-improvement, self-learning as in the 'learning organisation'. This suggests a strengthened role for boards (pp.330-331) with a focus on the internal workings of the school, an enhancement of the accountability function. Moving towards the governing body model evident in England is a possibility, but hints in this direction within the 1998 consultative document were meagre. It might provide a more meaningful role, but would require direct funding being transferred from the headteacher to the board to allow more executive functions. Professionals are likely to resist such a move. An unresolved issue for governing bodies and participative councils is the extent to which they should be advisory or perform policy-making and executive functions. The 1998 consultative document had a section entitled "Increasing responsibilities" but the examples given concern issues such as uniform, homework and school hours - scarcely mainstream policy issues. The purposes of boards might better be prescribed more tightly at a national level to provide clarity of role.

New legislation might be necessary but the current Act does offer boards freedom to determine their own limits (with specific exclusions eg employment and dismissal of school staff) and to choose to have increased responsibilities. A government information campaign emphasising this facility or models of boards which might be adopted or adapted would help. Society and cultures can change and be changed as the last twenty years are testimony to. There is also a possibility that boards might become party-politicised by such a move.

If there was greater political and local democratic interest in boards generally, they would be more influential entities. At present, if the abolition of boards was proposed protests might be muted, but there

remain a number of parents who would wish to retain boards and to identify and play a genuine role. While Labour vigorously opposed the introduction of boards (without offering a genuine alternative (9.3)) as a Tory creation foisted on schools, their development, not abolition, is clearly a priority. Board existence has been brief and the time honoured Scottish verdict of 'Not proven' might be applied to them; more time is required to form a firmer judgement recommending disposing of them.

New Labour have asserted that they stand for a "stake-holder" society and boards offer them a ready opportunity to test certain approaches or provide a model which might then migrate to other spheres of society. The notion of wider representation on boards, while superficially attractive, could dilute the influence of certain stakeholders if representation becomes too unfocused. I believe the present structure is adequate and should not become unwieldy; there could be minor changes such as non-teaching staff in schools being represented or being part of an enlarged school staff constituency recognising the growing importance of teamwork and complimentary skills necessary to deliver a curriculum fit for the 21st century; this suggestion is not evident in the 1998 consultative paper. Other proposals not included might be an extension of the period of office by a few more years, and I do believe that teachers with children at the school they work in should not be precluded from office in that board if we are serious about electoral democracy. Other commentators (pp.324-325) have offered more efficient ways in which boards may operate; the inclusion of the headteacher as a board member (which is suggested in the 1998 consultative paper) and a clarification of the role and function of co-optees have been offered as possible structural developments and will form part of the consultation.

Despite this new consultation confirming boards, it could be argued that boards might be abolished and funding used to pay external consultants to assess schools' willingness and capacity to relate to parents and to others in their community. No matter the changes which might emerge in the future, board fortunes are likely to be mixed. Some boards persist only through a form of headteacher insistence because they do not wish their school not to have a board, and 'pressure' is put on parents to nominate themselves for boards (this was my personal experience). Perhaps too much depends on such professional goodwill or selfishness. Even if responsibilities are increased, boards might continue to operate as silent partners content with apparent consensus, while the more adventurous or assertive might engage in watchful acquiescence (p.10), affirming support but on occasion seeking to influence policy or intervening to have something redressed (Macbeth, 1994), but will this be sufficient?

Alvin Toffler (1971) argued for a "council of the future" for every school to help it to prepare pupils for a society of rapid change. Do headteachers know enough about the changes and future which awaits us and would school boards be better informed than heads in their assessment of needs for the future? Globalisation and the pace of new technology make society different and teaching and learning potentially radically different in a few years' time. The computer revolution allied with the Internet and digital technology is either a hugely successful marketing exercise to persuade us these are necessary purchases or a means of freeing people to do other pursuits. When critics of school management congregate they talk of schools adopting management techniques which leading edge industries have abandoned; are we preparing our professional teachers and headteachers for the past? Proposals for the national *Grid for Learning* highlight the inadequacy of teacher professionals in relation to interactive

communications technology and I am not sanguine about the proposed training to be supported by Lottery funding. Awareness of 'black-box' technology and how to access its functionality is far removed from using it to promote effective teaching and learning. Truly interactive learning software development is in its infancy and one despairs of CDroms appearing in linear format failing to capitalise on the possibilities of 'instant' accessibility and ready manipulation of data and images. The ever more powerful and increasingly compatible hardware has not been matched by programming development and in education this is compounded because pedagogy has not been transformed to harness the scope and ease of information access. One may speculate about the physical future of schools as places of learning, virtual schools already exist on the Internet, but in my opinion will never replace opportunities for face-to-face interaction but they may reduce this and offer a great deal more flexibility. Can we envisage a 3 day week for schools or learning centres, which will also be on-line and interactive 24 hours a day as an accessible resource through electronic medium to communities whose previous experience may have inhibited a return to learning? The spread and reducing costs of digital technology allows a future to be envisaged when most if not all homes may be linked electronically. Depending on parental attitudes on the role of schooling there could be significant changes to the patterns and means of learning and the nature of the curriculum studied by young students and 'lifelong learners'.

What would be the role of boards in such a future? There would inevitably be administrative and management issues for the 24 hour school which focused local and external opinion through the medium of a board might be helpful in resolving. Collaboration between different sections of the community and business is envisaged for this new learning environment

and membership of a board could be extended and technology could be used to facilitate this too. Current professionals may not have the vision to relate to such a world and may subconsciously work against it. External perspectives could be brought in by boards so that the current professional expertise is complemented and extended.

- **What are the possible political alternatives?**

A Scottish Parliament may change the culture. The likelihood of national democratic debate and decision-making about Scottish education in our own Parliament could invigorate local democracy. The model of all party representation allows exchange of a range of views and the possibility of a consensus emerging which might allow long-term approaches to be tested. Initial signals suggest a new breed of politician becoming MSPs is likely. There is an emphasis developing on equality particularly with regard to gender and through proportional representation. If education ceased to be a function of local authorities, if there was a single portfolio Minister of Education, if tax raising powers were focused on the claimed interests of Scots eg improving the health service and education, then boards would have an opportunity to be more influential. The need for a middle tier of government, the current unitary authorities, would be open to question. The stake-holder society referred to above could become a reality with more direct exchange between Parliament and local boards populated by active citizens. Such boards might exist in interest areas other than education.

School boards, already used to making representation to EAs and lobbying, may choose to bypass EAs, particularly after experience if exposed to EA committees as proposed in the 1998 consultation paper, and seek answers direct from Parliament. The new Scottish ministers may be overwhelmed by the expectations of access and immediacy about the

Parliament currently being built up, all of which suggest that action will be expected. Individual boards may not make much difference to policy development, but a federation such as the SSBA or SPTC could lobby Parliament. Consequently the Scottish Office civil service is likely to be called to account much more than it currently is and this may lead to bodies such as SSBA shaping agendas for boards in the future.

Experience as local active parents on boards might lead to some standing for election to this Parliament.

12.7 What are my preferences and vision for the immediate future?

Boards implied that a new relationship between teachers and parents might develop and that was given emphasis in the government's 1998 consultation document. An enhanced role for parents would place new demands on teacher professionalism while validating that professionalism.

A genuine partnership would mean professionals sharing power which they tend to dislike doing, even when they claim to support partnership.

There are two specific types of partnership involved; that between teachers and parent(s) of the individual child and a partnership relating to school policies. Neither has really resulted so far but professional influence within schools could yet be enhanced and legitimated in this way.

Individual parents would continue to rely on teachers for professional advice when making those possible but limited decisions relating to subject choice for example, about their children's education. Teachers and school managements would have to make adjustments to enable and encourage parents to participate fully on school boards. Many parent and individual consultative replies in 1987 were clear in their estimation that parents lacked the skills, knowledge and time for a management role; it will be interesting to review the 1998 consultation replies to see if this has changed. Training alone would not deal with such a perceived deficit, much would depend on the professional response to a sharing of

responsibility and teachers' capacity to be professionally receptive, assertive and affirming and not defensive or negative in their response.

Having been a teacher and subsequently a school board member, I admit to having been reluctant 'to rock the boat' while wishing to have a more influential role. My professional career now involves working as an executive for a board of governors and I have learned from this process. External and lay advice is an important source, which can offer grounding and alternative experience and expertise which I do not possess. For me a clearly defined and apportioned partnership input in policy formulation at school level with involvement in genuine goal setting perhaps through the mechanism of development planning would be ideal. I could continue to lobby for resources in relation to my school but an awareness of other schools and locales and their needs might temper my demands. The vicissitudes of the market place mentality might also be reduced by such awareness. I should like boards to focus more on curriculum and learning approaches and to promote more the complementary roles of parents and teachers for pupil learning and personal and social education which are critical for a healthy society.

12.8 What further research would prove helpful?

From the historical angle an interview with Forsyth to obtain his account and perspective would prove invaluable; it could provide insights which might illuminate some of the gaps including views on the role of officials within the Scottish Office. He appears to have resigned himself meanwhile to a life without active politics. I feel this is a potential loss to an inclusive approach to the Scottish Parliament, but he may now feel able to reflect on his period of office and more dispassionately assess his aims and if he was successful.

The relationship of boards to the new Parliament, particularly the role of SSBA and its adopted national lobbying facet (cf 1993 SSBA Annual Report), would be a useful project. The 1998 consultative responses could be compared with views from the two exercises of the 1980s and any resulting changes to boards could be monitored and compared with existing school board practices. Research on the workings of boards through longitudinal studies to test the extent to which they may be acting differently from the initial few years as a measure of their development would prove interesting. Several schools have obtained '*Investors in People*' recognition, but have boards been included in this process? Replication of the many studies internationally on types of people (age, gender, socio-economic status etc) who become board members would also provide useful findings and allow comparisons. Other questions and approaches to pursue might include:

A repeat of the methodology employed in the 1980 GU research on school councils would identify if there has been a change. Use of the same techniques especially item analysis of council/board functions and the questionnaire to members would allow comparisons to be made.

A series of in-depth case studies of school boards would be valuable to approach questions such as:

- Is there a set of skills and attributes necessary to be a successful board member?
- What makes boards effective, and effective for whom?
- What strategies might be useful for board members?
- What influence on school effectiveness and standards has increased information to parents had?
- What influence on school effectiveness and standards have the

functions and responsibilities of boards been?

- What power and influence is shared by professionals on boards?
- How do boards deal with information, to what extent are professionals acting as gatekeepers?
- How do boards measure their success?
- How aware are board members of the openness of the legislation and its potential?

I have posited the need for a code of conduct for professionals. Is there a similar requirement for board members? This might relate to queries such as: How should board members represent? How should they relate to confidential issues? Should they have concerns for 'value for money' and seek accountability of other kinds too? Should they encourage freedom of expression and deal with disagreements in constructive ways? Also are the implications of models of management and new managerialism as applied to boards already outmoded?

From the theoretical perspective even if participation is desirable, a question worth exploring is whether there is any public demand for it. The notion of psychological disposition might be considered. Politicians may have a disposition to become involved in civic matters and may assume that all citizens are so inclined too. That may explain the presumption that boards would be welcomed. Bureaucrats may have a disposition to preserve and maintain existing systems; as a result they may be reluctant to promote ideas which may cause further change such as the capacity of boards to take on additional powers.

12.9 Conclusion

Assessment of the recent past must be provisional. The structure of school boards provides a greater local focus than school councils did. While one may criticise the under-performance of boards in relation to the legislative potential and theoretical possibilities, board members have taken up their initially limited duties responsibly and conscientiously and have volunteered their time for regular meetings without recompense largely committed to and in support of their school. The interest and care they have taken over involvement in appointments is a signal of their interest in something which they see as meaningful.

The climate surrounding the introduction of school boards was unhelpful and EAs and schools, despite obvious efforts to support boards, have largely been unwilling to engage boards in decision-making. This I would contend is not through malice but through lack of insight into the possibilities participation by ordinary people may bring. This, when combined with lack of information and training about possible purposes, representation, accountability or the autonomy of boards to determine their own future (O'Brien, 1990), makes practical realisation of theory difficult, but the gap remains bridgeable.

The new devolved processes, the announced consultation on partnership and the prospect of a Scottish Parliament provide an opportunity to invigorate school boards and like councils in other areas in a stake-holder society as engines of local democracy geared for life in a rapidly changing world. It would be ironic if the vision of an increasingly educated and skilled citizenry essential for the country's social and economic well-being militated against a more open and democratic society.

Steele when interviewed spoke of the initial “fears and the angers” when boards were established but asserted that boards were now a “constructive group of people working together” with a shared aim of improving education for children. That may mean concentrating

on buildings from time to time, equipment from time to time, toilets from time to time, because they realise that these are messing their kids up... the environment has to be appropriate for learning.

but she suggests the board is "... concerned with education and... that the school sees them now as useful... in a positive light". Despite such perspectives, the overarching conclusion of this study remains that boards have not been operating as suggested by relevant theories. There has been disjunction between theory and system; and further disjunction between system and school board practice. The bureaucratic failure to have purposes explained and illustrated combined with central government policy to allow boards to determine their own additional responsibilities or to extend their influence, has contributed to disjunction. This has encouraged drift as distinct from the initial negativism (p.297) and boards rarely review why they are there (p.296). Change may grow naturally yet I believe intervention may be necessary and the Labour government will have interesting choices to make no matter the results of its consultation on partnership if boards are to be genuinely participative bodies.

Appendices

Appendix 1: School Council Consultative Exercise FMPro Analysis proforma

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AVAILABLE

Poor text in the original
thesis.

Some text bound close to
the spine.

Some images distorted

008	DocumentTitle	DocumentTYPE	Keywords
17/4/93	The Future of School Councils: A Submission prepared by the Scottish Consumer Council	Other Bodies response	HOME/SCHOOL
10/9/97			MANAGEMENT/
			STAKEHOLDERS
			ORGANISATION OF
			FUNCTIONS OF SC
			COMPOSITION OF
			SCHOOL/COMMUNI
			PARTNERSHIP
			REPRESENTATION

AMCoding	AMCodingIP	Respondent	Comment on Document
398	398	Scottish Consumer Council	Completed Annex B but also supplemented with comprehensive response paper

Document Purpose	Document Date
Official Response discussing particular issues which they suggest are not covered in questionnaire	4 January, 1985

Major Arguments

1. Structure - 1 per school where practicablewhich will enhance parental involvement and interest; H/S liaison. Area SC to be establish as necessary and to meet x2 per year?
2. Functions - extension of managerial and policy making powers of SCs and greater advisory role in other areas. H/S liaison regarded as prime area, set agst 'principal-in-council' argument as this might reinforce professional domination. Curriculum provision should be decided by SC within general framework established by national guidelines and EA policy. Homework and parental assistance areas of interest but detailed curric matters to be left to sch staff to determine.
3. Membership - equal voting of home membership (pupils and parents) with school reps (teachers, incl HTs) based on equal partnership
Community representation should be from community council plus others from community
4. Links with EA & Community
Information to be provided to SC by EAs

Response Type

- ☐ SC ANNEX B COMPLETION
- ☐ EA ANNEX B COMPLETION
- ☒ INTER. PARTIES ANNEX B COMPLETION
- ☐ NO QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE
- ☒ POSITION PAPER
- ☐ ALTERNATIVE RESPONSE
- ☐ NOT APPLICABLE
- ☐ OTHER...

Major Quotations

008
17/4/93
10/9/97

DocumentTitle
The Future of School Councils: A
Submission prepared by the
Scottish Consumer Council

DocumentTYPE
Other Bodies response

Keywords

- HOME/SCHOOL
- MANAGEMENT/
- STAKEHOLDERS
- ORGANISATION OF
- FUNCTIONS OF SC
- COMPOSITION OF
- SCHOOL/COMMUNI
- PARTNERSHIP
- REPRESENTATION

AMCoding398 AMCodingIP Respondent
398 SCOTTISH CONSUMER COUNCIL

I.P. AnnexB1 398 AMCodingIP I.P. AnnexB1Comment

- ☒ 1 COUNCIL PER SCHOOL YES
- ☒ 1 COUNCIL PER SCHOOL NO
- ☐ 1 COUNCIL PER SECONDARY FEEDER SCHOOLS YES
- ☐ 1 COUNCIL PER SECONDARY FEEDER SCHOOL NO
- ☐ OTHER

Endorse area councils

I.P. AnnexB2Comment

SC should have greater managerial and policy making functions plus important advisory functions particularly on a
school's policies on home-school liaison.....

I.P. AnnexB3

- ☒ PARENTS YES
- ☐ PARENTS NO
- ☒ PUPILS YES
- ☐ PUPILS NO
- ☒ SCHOOL STAFF YES
- ☐ SCHOOL STAFF NO
- ☒ EA MEMBERS YES
- ☐ EA MEMBERS NO
- ☒ EA OFFICIALS YES
- ☐ EA OFFICIALS NO
- ☒ RELIGIOUS INTERESTS YES
- ☐ RELIGIOUS INTERESTS NO
- ☒ LOCAL EMPLOYERS YES
- ☐ LOCAL EMPLOYERS NO
- ☒ LOCAL EMPLOYEES YES
- ☐ LOCAL EMPLOYEES NO
- ☐ OTHERS

Community Councils

I.P. AnnexB4a

Nos %

PARENTS	25
PUPILS	25
SCHOOL STAFF	50
EA MEMBERS	
EA OFFICIALS	
RELIGIOUS INTERESTS	
LOCAL EMPLOYERS	
LOCAL EMPLOYEES	
OTHERS	

I.P. AnnexB7

- ☐ YES EFFECTIVE LINKS EA/COMMUNITY
- ☐ NO EFFECTIVE LINKS EA/COMMUNITY
- ☐ DON'T KNOW
- ☐ UNSURE

I.P. AnnexB8

- ☐ YES EFFECTIVE EA/COMMUNITY IMPROVED WITHIN SC SYSTEM
- ☐ NO EFFECTIVE EA/COMMUNITY IMPROVED WITHIN SC SYSTEM
- ☐ DON'T KNOW
- ☐ UNSURE

I.P. AnnexB5

- ☐ restrictions on membership YES
- ☒ restrictions on membership NO

I.P. AnnexB6YESComment

no one should be excluded despite confidential...
nature of business simply because of category...
membership.....

I.P. AnnexB9YESComment

one SC perschool based on
'stakeholder' theory
also info and consultation on all
major proposed changes affecting
schools

I.P. AnnexB10

- ☐ LINK IMPROVED OUTSIDE SC SYSTEM YES
- ☐ LINK IMPROVED OUTSIDE SC SYSTEM NO
- ☐ OTHER RESPONSE
- ☐ UNDECIDED

I.P. AnnexB11YESComment

no straight yes/no

I.P. AnnexB14YESComment

present system does not afford scope for good H/S relations. If SC (1per school) were
given a clear policy making and managerial role then this would improve this area

I.P. AnnexB12

- ☐ Basis for good home/school relationships YES
- ☒ Basis for good home/school relationships NO
- ☐ Undecided
- ☐ Other Response

I.P. AnnexB13

- ☐ basis improved within SC system YES
- ☐ basis improved within SC system NO

I.P. AnnexB15

- ☐ better served outside SC system YES
- ☐ better served outside SC system NO

I.P. AnnexB16YESComment

experiment to see if reformed SC on basis of 1 per school improves H/S relationships.

Other comment

**Appendix 2: School Board Proposal Consultative Exercise
FMPro Analysis proforma**

110
28/4/96
11/11/96

DocumentTitle

DocumentTYPE

Individual response

Respondent

J A Hoste

File (SED)

126C

Filerecord No (SED)

190

Geographical Location

Highland

Major Arguments

heartily welcome improved communication and liason between schools and parents but proposals greatly exceed the need and expectations of the vast majority of parents

emphasis on teachers being the professionals

reluctance of parents to be nominated and system of co-option is undemocratic

Comment on Document

Sample8

☒ YES 8th item ☐ NO additional item

Support for Parent Involvement

YES

Revamp SC

Keywords

REPRESENTATION

DEMOCRACY/

Favourable

☐ YES in favour of Boards/proposals
☐ NOT in favour of Boards/proposals
☐ NEUTRAL
☒ NOT CATEGORISABLE

Other Bodies

☐ E A
☐ Political
☐ Church
☐ Educ relate
☐ Industry & Commerce
☐ District Council
☐ Community Council
☐ National body
☐ Other

Issues raised

Professionals being undermined

Parents too busy-children/jobs- lack skills

Major Quotations

...I feel that in general and in some particulars the proposals are dangerous, impracticable and unfair on teachers and any situation which causes dissatisfaction within a school can only be to the detriment of our children.

Appendix 3: Interview questions

Broad areas of interest for interview with Mr David Brodie

Interview scheduled for week beginning 24th February 1997

Location: by telephone

1. To what extent did the establishment of School Boards reflect a concern to foster citizen participation and extend local democracy? Does the establishment of Boards reflect other political agendas for example concern for the consumer?
2. Legislation permits School Boards to discuss or make representations about anything to do with the school, but it could be suggested that Boards have been largely receptive to and uncritical of the reports of the Head Teacher at the level of the individual school; to what extent do you agree with this view?
3. To what extent do you agree that Board members have regarded their expertise as limited, and have been content to involve themselves in areas which may be considered to be educationally peripheral, such as building repairs or school transport?
4. What for you were the strengths and weaknesses of School Councils, the predecessors to Boards? How much support was there for the reform of School Councils throughout the 1980's?
5. In your opinion, what were the principal reasons for establishing School Boards? What are the purposes of School Boards? How aware, in your view, are Board members of such purposes or of other potential purposes? Have Government and EAs done enough to have these considered by Boards? If so, how?
6. What are your own recollections of the period of consultation and establishment of Boards? What were the main issues at that time? How strong was public opinion at the time about the School Board initiative? Have the issues been overtaken by events or experience subsequently?
7. Are Boards there to manage schools? What do Board members need to know about schools before they can make a contribution? What might be their contribution? Do SB members in general lack the necessary skills to make a contribution to the management of schools? If so, what skills do they need?
8. To what extent do you think the structure of School Boards is adequate/appropriate? How could the structure be improved?
9. How representative are Boards? Is a parental majority necessary? What alternatives, if any, would you support and why? What does being a representative mean for Board members and what do you see are the tasks that are implied?

10. How can SBs encourage greater participation at local level? Do schools need such involvement? Why do lay persons need to know anything about schools through Boards? What is the community involvement with SBs? How do Boards communicate best with their 'constituency'? Is such communication important why? How can Boards be more 'in tune' with their communities/ constituencies?
11. Do Board members need training? Do you think Boards have adequate training opportunities? Has it been the right type of training? What do they need training in? To what extent do you agree that training and information to Boards may have neutralised some of the potential democratic objectives of boards?
12. Should Board members be critical or supportive of schools? What role should school professionals play in relation to Boards? To what extent do you think that SBs have tended to support and legitimise school professionals? Is this a result of reluctance to engage with potential conflict or disagreement? As volunteers, do Board members have sufficient time to play an effective role?
13. What would be your response to the assertion that professional interests both from schools and Education Authority have eclipsed the work of Boards, and as a result Board members have sought to support and legitimise the efforts of the school professionals?
14. To date to what extent have School Boards fulfilled their 'promise'? How might the work of Boards be enhanced? How do you envisage Boards developing in the future? Should Boards move towards a similar role as that of (English) 'governing bodies'? In your view, is the government content with the appearance of local democracy without necessarily the reality of such through School Boards?
15. How might unitary authorities or a different government effect changes in School Board function, structure and process?
16. Are there other insights from your own research on SBs and/or parents which might be helpful to this study?

**Appendix 4: School board proposals and post consultation
Amendments**

Illustration of School Board proposals and the effect of the Consultation Exercise

Category	August 1987 proposals	January 1988 proposals post consultation
<u>Qualifying boards</u>	Schools with 100+ pupils to have a board	No pupil threshold, all schools to have a board
<u>Membership</u>	Parental majority; HT not a member; up to 3 teacher members; up to 3 co-opted members	No change
<u>Term of office</u>	Members to hold office for 3 years	4 year period of office, retiral by rotation every two years
<u>“Ceiling powers”</u>	Certain functions to be given when Secretary of State believed it appropriate	Ostensibly removed as a power of Secretary of State to regulate “Ceiling powers” replaced by Delegation orders
<u>Rights, duties etc.</u>	Board to receive HT report and annual financial account Right to be consulted on certain matters Right to fix charges for school lets Right to reject a teacher at appointment Board to control ‘per capita’ expenditure Veto on appointment of HT Powers to raise funds Right of HT to attend board meetings	Unchanged Unchanged but EAs not allowed to delegate control of curriculum Removed Removed but representation on staffing matters permitted HT to retain control but approval of board necessary within certain guidelines Removed, but board approval of ‘short leet’ for all senior staff introduced Clarified, limited and certain conditions introduced If HT asked by a board to attend, this becomes a duty

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